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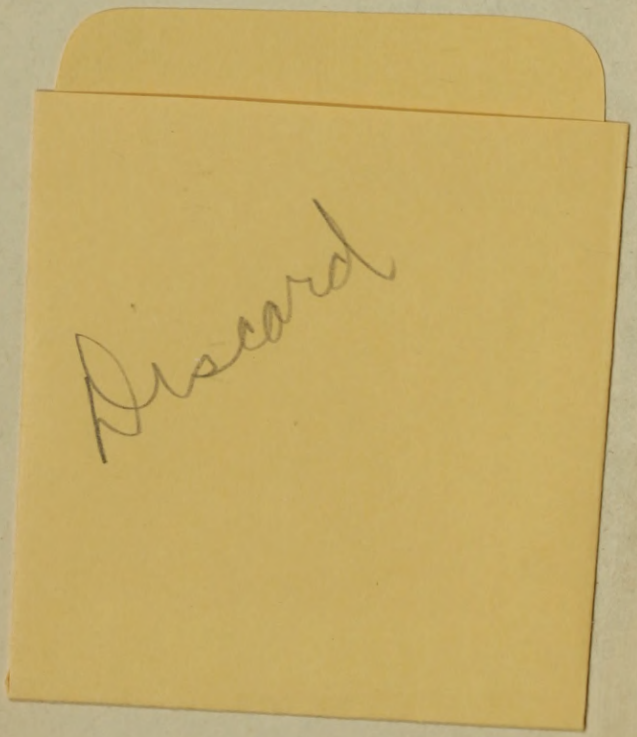

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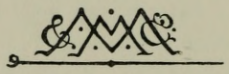

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# THE LATER PERIODS

OF

# QUAKERISM

BY

RUFUS M. JONES, M.A., D.Litt., D.D.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HAVERFORD COLLEGE, U.S.A.
AUTHOR OF "THE INNER LIFE," "THE WORLD WITHIN," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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1921

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TO

JOSEPH ROWNTREE,

WISE, TRUE, WORTHY OF HONOUR,

DOUBLY DEAR AS THE FATHER OF MY BELOVED FRIEND,

JOHN WILHELM,

WHO WAS THE PIONEER AND INSPIRER OF

THE HISTORICAL SERIES,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

# PREFACE

THIS book completes the Rowntree Series devoted to the history of the origin and development of Quakerism. The Series includes my two introductory volumes: *Studies in Mystical Religion* and *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*; two volumes by William Charles Braithwaite: *The Beginnings of Quakerism* and *The Second Period of Quakerism*; *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, in which I had the co-operation of Isaac Sharpless and Amelia M. Gummere, and this present volume, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*. John Wilhelm Rowntree had planned to write the History of the Society of Friends, and I had planned, at the same time, to write the History of Mysticism. His death in 1905 made it necessary to reshape all the literary plans which we had made, and in the summer of that year the Series was outlined and begun. After sixteen years the task has come to completion. The reception of the previous volumes has given us much encouragement, and we hope that the finished Series may prove to be a genuine contribution to the meaning and significance of one type of spiritual religion. We have endeavoured to tell the somewhat complicated story clearly and impartially. We have not been writing an apology or defending a favoured position. We have been presenting the historical unfolding of a religious movement as it moved and not as we wished to have it move. It has its lessons not only for Friends but, as we believe, for other Christians as well.

I have received a large amount of assistance from many helpers. I should like to put first in this list the name of the late Allen C. Thomas, formerly Librarian of Haverford College, who gave me much advice, counsel, and aid in my work of research, and whose earthly life came to a sudden close while the present volume was being printed. William Charles Braithwaite, B.A., LL.B., whose two volumes in this Series are outstanding contributions, has read some of my manuscript and all of my proof, and has given me many important suggestions. Norman Penney, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., Librarian of the Reference Library at the headquarters of the Society of Friends, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, London, assisted me constantly in my researches in that Library. He has read my proofs, and he and his assistants verified a multitude of references and bestowed a very large amount of labour upon the book. My wife has been a true fellow-labourer in the entire undertaking. Her help has been an indispensable factor in all stages of the work. In the last stage she has minutely read the proofs and she has made the index. The six years during which I have been writing this book have been crowded with practical tasks, but I have often found solace and relief from the strain and agony of the world tragedy in the calm and quiet Journals of the past, and in the patient, constructive, spiritual labours of these holy men and women, and I have renewed through these contacts my faith in the slow but irresistible might of silent spiritual forces.

World War I

HAVERFORD, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.A.,
*Mid-winter* 1921.

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"All living History is contemporary History—dead annals freshly reinterpreted into present thought."

BENEDETTO CROCE.

---

"Each age must worship its own thought of God,
More or less earthy, clarifying still
With subsidence continuous of the dregs;
Nor saint nor sage could fix immutably
The fluent image of the unstable Best,
Still changing in their very hands that wrought:
To-day's eternal Truth To-morrow proved
Frail as frost-landscapes on a window-pane.
Meanwhile Thou smiledst, inaccessible,
At Thought's own substance made a cage for Thought,
And Truth locked fast with her own master-key;
Nor didst Thou reck what image man might make
Of his own shadow on the flowing world;
*The climbing instinct was enough for Thee.*"

LOWELL'S *Cathedral.*

# INTRODUCTION

THE type of religion studied in the historical series of which these are the concluding volumes has been essentially mystical. No other large, organized, historically continuous body of Christians has yet existed which has been so fundamentally mystical, both in theory and practice, as the Society of Friends—the main movement studied in this series—from its origin in the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth century, and in certain sections even through the nineteenth century.

These present volumes record the profound transformation which occurred in the nineteenth century, and which carried a large proportion of the membership of the Society of Friends, both in England and America, over from a mystical basis to what for want of a better term may be called an evangelical basis. The process of transformation was very slow and came into operation—or at least to consciousness—long after the Wesleys and Whitefield had carried through their great evangelical revival; but though it was late, and though the main influence came from the evangelical leaders in the English Church rather than directly from the leaders of Methodism, there can be little question that this religious emphasis which was a characteristic feature of the Wesleyan revival, was the primary cause of the transformation of Quakerism. The transformation was, as I have said, gradual and proceeded for a long time without revealing the fact that a break with the past was taking place. It is clear, however, in historical perspective, that where the changes in the Society of Friends have been in the direction of a

"return" to the evangelical systems of the reformed faith, a type of Christianity has been produced which is in strong and radical contrast to the mystical movement inaugurated by George Fox. The latter broke with the theological systems of Protestantism as completely as Luther and Calvin had done with Catholicism. He felt that he was inaugurating a *new reformation.* His movement was an attempt to produce a type of Christianity resting upon no authorities external to the human spirit, a Christianity springing entirely out of the soul's experience, verified and verifiable in terms of personal or social life. The simplification seemed possible to Fox and his friends because they had made the memorable discovery that the Christ who saves is a living Christ, operating in vital fashion within the lives of men. They had thus to do no longer with a system constructed on a theory of a God who was remote or absentee. They went forth with the *live conviction* that God, revealed to them in Christ, was active, creative and present—still making His world, so that they could expect new stages and fresh dawnings, even though the darkness seemed very thick and the dead hand of the past very heavy. To abandon that position and outlook and to "return" to the systems of the past would mean, of course, that Augustine and Luther and Calvin had won the victory and had triumphed over Fox, as in some sense and in some degree they have done.

In its broad and untechnical sense the adjective evangelical denotes a type of Christianity which conforms to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which carries forward in a vital and dynamic way the life and message first expressed and proclaimed by Him and by the apostolic circle. Used in this untechnical sense, all devout believers in Jesus Christ, all of His true disciples and followers in all ages, are evangelicals, and none more truly so than the great mystics of the Christian Church. Those who, in the modern period, have joyously accepted the fresh light and the liberating influences brought to our age by scientific and historical research and who yet recognize

the absolute spiritual supremacy of Christ, and who find in Him the full and final revelation of the essential nature of God and man, are, too, evangelicals in this proper and nobler meaning of the word. All great preaching—preaching, that is, which in our day or in any day convicts and transforms men—owes its kindling power to its *evangelical note.* Whenever an interpreter of Christianity returns to the heart of the gospel message and recovers its life, its simplicity and its authority, he becomes at once a moral and spiritual force in his community and in his time. In all periods Friends have aimed to be evangelical in this good sense of the word. They have regarded the living Christ as the ground of their faith, the source of their power, and the central fact of their message. They have proclaimed a positive and joyous evangel—good news regarding God and man and the coming kingdom. Since the period of the Reformation, however, and more emphatically since the great awakening in the eighteenth century under the leadership of Wesley, "evangelical" has taken on a sharply defined and technical meaning. It denotes, in this narrow sense, a well-marked conception of human nature, a certain definite position toward the Scriptures, an essential body of theological doctrine and an indispensable plan of salvation. It stands in this latter sense not for a religious attitude or experience, but for the adoption of a definite theological system, belief in which is assumed to be essential to salvation.

The vital task and mission of mysticism in all ages, whether exhibited in individuals or in a group movement, like that of the Society of Friends, has been to call men away from "theological systems," however sacred, to the fresh and living water to be found in a personal experience of God. The mystic, when once he has felt the joy of direct discovery of what life with God means, cannot endure to think of reducing religion to an affair of phrases or to a formulated scheme. It seems to him as impossible to form and nurture the soul of man upon forensic systems and theories of salvation as it would be to bring up a child upon a book about mother-love.

There are in either case no adequate substitutes for the real thing.

Mysticism itself has not alway avoided pitfalls and wandering fires. It has not always borne within itself the witness and demonstration that new dimensions of life had been found and that new sources of spiritual energy had been tapped. It has, however, on the whole given a convincing testimony to the fact that the relation between God and man is not remote, forensic and logical, but direct, energizing, vital and transforming—as much a matter of experience and verification as sunlight is. The mystic has, of course, been compelled to use the language of his time, and he has often with reservations employed the expressions which the theologians have coined, but he has always refused to treat them as more than inadequate *symbols* and not to be substituted for the thrilling adventure of personal discovery.

The mystics have never consented to the view that the revelation of God is limited to an ancient dispensation or is confined to a Book. Their primary ground for believing that God once spoke through men—the men who wrote the Book—is their warm and intimate consciousness that the soul is still oracular and that God speaks now. They hold the revelation of God to be continuous and unending, though at the same time they put as great a value as any one does upon the ethical and spiritual truths revealed in the Bible. They are very conscious of human frailty. They know as much as any theologians do about sin and its dark trail over all our lives, but they nevertheless insist that the black blotches are on a white background, that man is made for divine companionship, that eternity has been put within our hearts, that evil is only one side of the human account, and that there is something—a homing instinct—in man which takes him back to God as naturally as the child turns in its joys and sorrows to its mother.

The interpretation which the mystic gives of salvation fits in essentially with this religion of experience and has in large measure sprung out of it. Christ, for the mystic,

is the eternal Lover, the Bridegroom of souls. He is the crown and culmination of divine revelation, and in His life and person He has forever made visible and vocal in our world the mind, the will, the heart, the character of God. He is an eternal manifestation of God, striking His being into bounds at a definite period of history, being born in human form in time and space, living a life of limitless love and forgiveness, and going the way of the Cross in unspeakable agony of suffering that He might forever show the consummate way of the spiritual life, and finally triumphing over defeat and death in a resurrection which proves Him to be a new type and order of spiritual life. He is thus the head of a new race, the first of a new series, the founder of a new kingdom, the revealer of a new way of living. His divine love, wooing, pleading, appealing, enduring all things, suffering with those who sin, and sharing the common tragedies of life with us, is the power unto salvation for all who understand and see its amazing significance. To be saved, then, would be to live by the impact and inspiration of His life, to feel the appeal of His personality, the contagion of His spirit, the drawing force of His unspeakable love, the operation of His invisible and eternal presence within, making the old life impossible and re-creating in the inner man a new will, a new heart, a new mind and a new-natured self, so that the old self with its instinctive tendencies no longer lives, but Christ lives at the centre as the force and spring of action and makes all things new.

The mystic here, as always, is assuming the immanence of God—a one-world system in place of the two-world one. He is oblivious to the chasm-theory. To put the supernatural realm off yonder, beyond the world which we know and in which we live, is to empty it of all value for explaining either life or truth. If God is to be *our* God, He must be here in the currents of life with us. Sin is to the mystic a fact, a tragic fact, but it is due to finiteness, to ignorance, and to weakness of will. Man must start from very feeble beginnings and learn the way by slow and painful experience, by failures as well as by

successes. What he needs then is spiritual illumination and moral re-enforcement. Christ is the source of both these. He is the Light of Life. He reveals and exhibits life in its full and complete measure. At last through Him we know what it would be like to *live*. And He brings into operation the supreme moral energy—the power of an unparalleled love, a love stronger than death, which neither height nor depth can measure. This Friend of ours, who is at the same time the very Heart of God incarnated and revealed, has made us see what sin costs, and how immeasurably far divine love can go to bring us out of sin and to guide us through the mazes of the temporal stage to our true habitat. Salvation is thus for the mystic a vital thing. It is re-living the life of Christ in His power and by His spirit. It is not an act of forensic justification, it is a process of regeneration and transformation, and finally the attainment of the type of life of which Christ is the first and perfect example. To be saved is to have experienced a new creation.

The difference between this first type of religion and a type of religion on the other hand which insists upon the recognition and adoption of a set of doctrines is a very emphatic and cardinal difference. There is probably no existing religion which is completely reduced to formulation and system. In all great religious lives and in all powerful movements systems have been transcended, and experience has flowed over and inundated the narrow formulation. But there is a type of religion, nevertheless, which tends to terminate in a theological system, to lead up to a mighty scheme of salvation instead of bringing men to a living, loving Person who reveals to them the life for which they were made, and who influences them vitally and ethically rather than logically and forensically. Forms of religion which claim infallible authority are always of this second type. They assume that religion, to be religion, must be a supernatural addition to human life, and hence must come to man from another sphere, and must be mediated through some superhuman authority. They fail to realize the true divine and spiritual poten-

tiality of man, and therefore their problem is at every step vastly different from that of a religion which begins and ends in direct experience of God as a normal fact of life.

Mystical religion, however, is not the only type that exhibits first-hand experience. It would be a mistake to imply that religion of the historical evangelical type has been, as revealed in lives, less dynamic and transforming than has mysticism. Both these types have been mighty spiritual forces in the day of their freshness and vitality, and they have both been as weak and ineffective as the shorn Samson in the cooled stage of crystallization and white ash. The evangelical movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which finally came over into Quakerism, was of all things alive in the persons of its leaders and its saints, and, it must be added, alive also in the unnamed and forgotten ordinary, everyday people who in multitudes found a new hope and inspiration and power and moral purity through the gospel as the evangelical preachers interpreted it and proclaimed it. It was in its enkindled period no less a first-hand religion, no less a thing of experience, than was mysticism itself. What these men had discovered who woke England from its lethargy and changed sodden miners into clean-souled triumphant men and women was not a set of abstract dogmas to be argued about and printed in a book; they had found a personal Saviour whom they felt they knew, and who, as they trusted Him and followed Him, released them by a direct income of energy from their old habits and their former propensities. Whitefield, who certainly in temperament was not a mystic, and who looked for his salvation wholly to a finished work done for him by Another, had "a glorious visitation," and a crisis which culminated in unspeakable peace. "The day-star," he says, "arose in my heart. The spirit of mourning was taken from me. For some time I could not avoid singing Psalms wherever I was, but my joy became gradually more settled. Thus were the days of my mourning ended."

Cowper, the loftiest poet of the movement, has finely

expressed this first-hand experience of God when the soul has put itself in right relations with Him :

> Admitted once to His embrace
> Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before.
> Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,
> Made pure, shall relish with divine delight
> Till then unfelt, what Hands divine have wrought.[1]

John Haime's testimony out of his own experience is a characteristic account of the new creation which actually came to all types of people as their faith laid hold of the grace offered in the gospel of salvation. Haime had lived a rough and wicked life, sinning and feeling all the time a terror of the judgment of God for his evil ways. "Many times," he says, in his account of himself, "I have stopped in the street afraid to go on one step farther lest I should step into hell." Then came, by one of those sudden conversions, so frequent in the annals of the evangelical movement, a great experience and a new career. "One day, as I walked by the Tweed side I cried aloud, being all athirst for God, 'Oh that Thou wouldst hear my prayer, and let my cry come up before Thee!' The Lord heard. He sent a gracious answer. He lifted me out of the dungeon. He took away my sorrow and fear, and filled my soul with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The stream glided swiftly along, and all nature seemed to rejoice with me. I was truly free ; and had I had any to guide me I need never more have come into bondage."[2]

John Nelson, a Yorkshire mason, is another good example of the transforming power and the dynamic quality of this evangelical faith. He had lived "without God," and with no expectation of getting free from his sin and sinful habits. When, however, the great act of his faith was once made, a new man was the result. "My soul seemed to breathe its life in God," he wrote of the event, "as naturally as my body breathed life in the common air." Some measure of his spirit can be taken from his calm words facing a furious mob which threatened

[1] *The Task*, Bk. V.
[2] Fitchetts, *Wesley and his Century* (New York, 1912), p. 235.

to kill him. "You must ask my Father's permission first; for, if He has any more work for me to do, all the men in the town cannot kill me till I have done it." Being imprisoned for preaching his saving gospel, John Nelson wrote in his Journal: "My soul was as a watered garden, and I could sing praises to God all the day long; for He turned my captivity into joy and gave me to rest as well on boards, as if I had been on a bed of down. Now could I say, 'God's service is perfect freedom,' and I was carried out much in prayer that my enemies might drink of the same river of peace which my God gave so largely to me."[1]

No less remarkable is the testimony of the illiterate but extraordinary Methodist evangelist of a later period, Billy Bray. He has vividly described his entrance upon the new life of conversion as follows: "I said to the Lord: 'Thou hast said, they that ask shall receive, they that seek shall find, and to them that knock the door shall be opened, and I have faith to believe it.' In an instant the Lord made me so happy that I cannot express what I felt. I shouted for joy. I praised God with my whole heart. . . . I think this was in November 1823, but what day of the month I do not know. I remember this, that everything looked new to me, the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a new man in a new world. I spent the greater part of my time in praising the Lord."[2] In a later passage the same evangelist describes his feelings in this quaint but expressive way: "I can't help praising the Lord. As I go along the street, I lift up one foot and it seems to say, 'Glory'; and I lift up the other, and it seems to say, 'Amen'; and so they keep up like that all the time I am walking."

Not only in the lives of leaders and evangelists who kept Journals did new power and moral strength come into play, but a new force as well found expression through this movement in the individual and social life of

[1] Nelson's *Journal*, p. 172.

[2] W. F. Bourne, *The King's Son: a Memoir of Billy Bray* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1887), p. 9.

England. It was an intense and aggressive type of religion. It compelled men to take sides, to say yes or no, to be for or against. There was no place in it for lukewarm Laodiceans, and throughout the period of the great evangelical succession—from Wesley to Wilberforce —the movement restored religion to a first place in the thought and consideration of men. It was no longer possible, after this movement had done its work of awakening, for one to say, as Bishop Butler did in the Advertisement prefixed to his famous *Analogy*, that "it has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." Nor would a foreign visitor have said during this movement what Montesquieu said at an earlier date: "In England there is no religion, and the subject, if mentioned, excites nothing but laughter." Canon Liddon is justified in saying, as he did in his *Life of Pusey*: "The deepest and most fervid religion in England during the first three decades of this century [the nineteenth] was that of the evangelicals."[1]

But while this fact of new life and fresh power is undoubtedly true, and one can hardly overestimate the historical importance of the evangelical awakening, there were unmistakable elements of weakness in it which became more evident when the high-tide of pristine fervour waned. Sir James Stephen very sagely says that the movement showed "that men might live very wisely while they reasoned very absurdly,—that much practical sanctity was consistent with much theoretical error,—that the victims of many strange superstitions might yet have within them the living fountains of eternal life, and that to a head impervious to a syllogism might be united a

[1] *Life of Pusey*, vol. i. p. 255.

heart penetrated with the love of God and with the love of man."[1]

The movement was never significant because of its intellectual discoveries or because it added to human thought a fresh contribution of essential truth. It had no new stock of ideas. It held the main body of old-fashioned orthodox views. The dull, droning, barren clergymen, whose congregations were sitting half asleep on Sunday and living through the week untouched by any inspiration which came from the pulpit, held pretty much the same set of doctrines as did these men who woke the world from slumber and set men to living on higher levels of moral and spiritual power. The difference was not in creed; it was in *caloric*. In one case certain ideas which, for the preacher, had become cold, inert and dead, were shuffled back and forth as mere counters. In the other case the ideas which were used were absolutely alive and throbbing with quickened vitality and power. That strange experience called faith — an inner vision of reality, an assent of soul, an apprehension of things not seen—made all the difference between formality on the one hand and *élan vital* on the other. How the heightened caloric was brought into operation, why inert ideas suddenly became dynamic, will always remain, in part at least, a mystery. Mutations on any level are hard to explain. But the cardinal element here was almost certainly the contagion of kindled, fused personalities. A few persons of rare gift found a source of life and power, and they proved to be extraordinary transmitters of spiritual light and heat to others, and the age was vivified. The same ideas which in their souls glowed with the heat of intensified life had just before, and might once again, seem as ineffective as the craters of extinct volcanoes.

If, therefore, we mean by "evangelicalism" a body of doctrines, a system of theological conceptions, we shall find it difficult to maintain the position that these doctrines, and these alone, contain the eternal truth of

[1] Stephen's *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography* (London, 1868), p. 441.

Christianity. If we mean by it a spirit of living faith, a quickened, vivified religion, a first-hand experience of transformation and salvation by the power of Christ, we shall follow its movement with awe and reverence and we shall thank God for its prolific effects. In other words, there are in brief two main types of religion, however disguised under names and forms. There is (1) religion in its intensified, dynamic quality, and (2) there is a religion which consists of a deposit or survival of conceptions or of practice, carried along because they have become sacred habits, traditions and customs, or because they are believed to have a utilitarian value.

The line between these two types can obviously never be sharply, exactly drawn. Even the most rigid forms of the second type may have, and often do have, a fringe of live experience, and even the most vital and caloric forms of the first type carry some cooled or congealed material which is mere "survival" stuff. All branches of Christianity which become at all important and historical reveal both of these types in greater or lesser degrees. We cannot conjure with famous party names and assume off-hand that a school or system which prides itself on a sacred rubric is therefore chosen of God and elect. The real test is not to be made by canons of orthodoxy and historic theological pedigree; it is rather to be found in the dynamic quality and transforming power of one's faith. In other words, religion—religion as it concerns us in this age of the world—is a way of living, a heightening of life-force, a way of drawing upon unseen realities and of expanding the life in all its dimensions. It is a process of correspondence with man's whole *environment*, not merely with the part that occupies space; and the evidence that it is something more than superstition or invention or illusion will be found in the way it *works* as a real constructive life-force, the way it heightens life and releases energy.

There are many ways of drawing upon the invisible resources of the universe and of releasing energy to live by. Religion is one of these ways. When a person

succeeds, by conscious or subconscious processes, in unifying the usually divided will, in concentrating all the inner forces upon one absorbing end, in focussing the soul's aspiration and loyalty upon one central object which meets its need and seems adequate for its nature, this surrender of self to a higher and holier Will produces the state and conditions that are essential for the flooding in of spiritual energy and for an increment and re-enforcement of one's normal powers. Everybody knows through some memorable experience what it means to lose suddenly all fear and fear-thoughts that have obsessed him and to rise up with heightened courage to face the tasks that are waiting to be done. Most persons, sometime in their lives, have seen the shadows flee away, shot through by a conquering light, and have found themselves possessed with insight and forward-looking, victorious spirit. The literature of conversion is full of records of men and women, beaten and defeated, down and out, suddenly lifted to new levels of experience, put within reach of transforming forces, flooded with transfiguring light, and becoming in the strength of this faith or this experience "twice-born" persons. This arrival of new forces of energy is, I believe, a distinguishing mark of first-hand religion, religion in its real intention.

Madame Guyon, as we shall see in a succeeding chapter, arrived at a stage of experience which she called "spiritual fecundity." Unusual power of control and of endurance seemed supplied to her and, beyond that, she appeared to be able to act as a channel for currents of life and love to flow through her into others. She is no solitary example of such "fecundity." From somewhere forces not usually operating suddenly come into play and reveal their energy and their constructive activity. A person formerly "weak as any other man" becomes more than conqueror. New depths have been reached, new resources have been tapped, a fusing and kindling results, a fresh creative activity is revealed and an energizing of the whole life occurs. This energism of religion is found alike in mystical experience and in the exercise of faith

as the evangelical uses the word. Wherever there is evidence of real impressive energizing, heightening of life-values, we are dealing with a vital stage of religion.

Life is a word of many meanings. It can be used in numerous aspects and in a large variety of ways. After we have exhausted the narrow biological implications of the word, we can still go on and find other significant meanings. There is an inner dimension to life which must be counted at least as real as the outer one where life-cells perform their movements. The realities which constitute for us this inner realm are our ethical and spiritual values—our loves, our loyalties, our insights, our ideals, our convictions. These are the things *by which we live.* They constitute our real personality. They make us what we are to ourselves and to those who intimately know us. Whatever permanent satisfactions we have centre round these real constituents of our inner life. To heighten and intensify these ethical and spiritual values is to increase life; to raise and expand the quality of love, of loyalty and of the soul's vision of truth is to bring a genuine increment to life itself.

When we make the test of *live* religion to be its vital, caloric, transforming, energizing quality, we mean that something comes through the religious faith and experience which ennobles love and loyalty, reinforces ideal insights and visions, something which organizes those forces in us that control, something which fortifies confidence in the mastery and final victory of truth and goodness. The individual, through his religion, becomes more joyous, more radiant, more consecrated to universal ends of goodness, more absorbed in tasks which aim to put love into full operation in the lives of men. The religious person becomes, too, at the same time, if his religion is vital, progressively grounded in his central faith that there is an eternal God at the heart of things with whom he is co-operating, an environing life which vitalizes his own and *corresponds* in mutually intimate and reciprocal ways with his own life, and promotes in the long run the triumph of the Spirit.

Evangelical religion can exhibit a notable array of testimony to the effect that "faith is the victory," that the discovery of free grace and saving love revealed in Christ is energizing and brings spiritual fecundity. Luther's famous account of faith is borne out in the experience of multitudes of persons: "Faith is a living, deliberate confidence in the grace of God, so certain that for it one could die a thousand deaths. And such confidence makes the believer joyous, intrepid and full of cheer towards God and all creation." [1]

The way in which *meaning* suddenly flashes into an awakened consciousness and brings new insight and power is, again, finely told in Luther's *Table-Talk*: "When a fellow-monk one day repeated the words of the Creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins,' *I saw the Scripture in an entirely new light; and straightway I felt as if I were born anew. It was as if I had found the door of Paradise thrown wide open!*" The world is very familiar now, in these anniversary years of the great events of Luther's heroic period, with the epoch-making discovery which turned Luther from a contemplative monk into a world-shaking Reformer. Formerly it was supposed that the transforming discovery was made on the "holy stairway" in Rome. It is now generally conceded by historians that the new insight came to the monk while he was preparing his lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, probably about 1515. He had long been struggling over the meaning of "justification" and he had puzzled in vain over the way in which a "merciless and angry" God could be appeased and satisfied. Suddenly the meaning of the apostolic words, "the just shall live by faith," surged into his mind. He realized in a flash of inner light that God meets man's needs with grace and not with wrath, in a word that God is like Christ and so forgives. It seemed to him in the joy of this illumination as though the gates of paradise had opened wide.

But we are in quite another world when we pass over from this first-hand experience of energized awakening to

[1] Preface to the *Epistle to the Romans*.

the cooled lava stage of inherited, transmitted doctrine. Evangelical Christianity very easily drops to this lower secondary stage, and those who are antagonistic to it for the most part know it only as a dry formulated system of theology, arbitrarily set up as the only way of salvation. It is obvious that no type of religion can ever hold its place in the continuous life of men and generations which does not stand for positive, distinctive truth and carry along well-defined ideas, so that in one sense there can be no religion without *doctrine*, that is without a formulation of truth. Nobody wants a religion which is mere enthusiasm, awakened emotion, undirected fire of the spirit! These emotional bursts end invariably in dissipated energy and disillusionment. Intellectual content and control of the will toward adequate ends of life are absolutely essential for the formation of a religion of power.

The difficulty with evangelicalism in this respect has been that its expounders and defenders have assumed, or at least have seemed to assume, that certain doctrines have a magical efficacy for salvation, as formerly contact with holy relics was supposed to have, or as the mediation of the ordained priest of the Middle Ages was believed to have, and these sacred doctrines have tended to become to their minds a good in themselves and an end in themselves. To hold those particular views, to assent to those essential doctrines, to say "yes" to that exalted scheme of salvation, is supposed to advance the soul in some mysterious way toward its eternal peace. Without meaning to be antinomian and with no intention of encouraging slackness in moral life, the advocates of this system do, nevertheless, unwittingly foster the impression that acceptance of doctrine brings salvation, and the natural effect has been and is that the essential business of moral conquest and spiritual transformation slips away from the centre into the fringe. Preaching tends to become, at least on the part of the smaller and less prophetic preachers, a repetitious expounding of doctrine, a wearisome re-statement of views, and by a well-known

psychological principle the minds of the listeners become "ichored" over and callous to the words. What has once been charged with the vital quality of awakened faith, surprise, discovery, truth, is now familiar, reiterated preacher's phrases, somewhat sleepily assented to as a view which must be in some way believed. Thus by the cooling processes of habit and custom and repetition the original power tends to wane and vanish.

The fundamental assumption of this type of religion that there are no new discoveries to be made, that nothing new is to be expected, that the returns of essential truth are all in, works in the direction of lethargy and stagnation. It is in this respect like the situation to which the schoolmen were doomed. They could not expect to discover anything by their philosophical search; they could only hope to find fresh ways of verifying *the truth* once for all revealed. The present-day student is apt to leave these schoolmen on their long mediaeval loop, and he leaps over from the dynamic ancients to the no less dynamic moderns. The very basic assumption that the way of human salvation can be put into a fixed and unchanging formulation and can be passed on from everlasting to everlasting in static form dooms it to become, on the part of those who accept it, a thing taken for granted on a basis of authority and assented to without much release of inner energy.

A graver difficulty appears, however, with a system like this. It is compelled in our time to face the insistent question of *fact*. Is this body of doctrine, claimed to be essential, able to resist all attempts to doubt it? Does it stand the severest "chemic tests"? Has it come triumphantly through the crucible of critical examination? Is one bound, if he would be a sincere disciple of Christ and if he hopes for full redemption from sin, to believe just this one set of doctrines as truth and nothing but truth? An unconditional affirmative cannot be given to these questions. The account of human nature upon which the eighteenth-century evangelicals insisted has been seriously shaken by the gradual progress of verified

knowledge. The traditional origin of the race from a lofty, exalted progenitor who fell by a single act of disobedience and involved the whole race in ruin and in moral depravity can be held only by persons who decline to accept the conclusions reached by the entire body of scientific scholars. The whole conception of man and of man's inner history on the planet has undergone a profound change to which a religion that is to survive and to speak to the condition of the growing world must adjust itself. This advancement of knowledge, this progress of science, has, it should be added, disproved no essential religious truth. It has not sapped or mined at any point the fundamental basis of spiritual life or saving faith, but it has unmistakably made clear that this particular theological account is built on tradition and not on historical fact. The narrative out of which the theory has been constructed is lofty epic literature, full of creative suggestion and laden with spiritual truth, but not factual, literal history, containing an infallible, genetic account of the race. These primitive narratives do give a profoundly significant view of the collision between instinct and moral insight and they furnish an impressive revelation of the truth that one cannot pass from pure innocence to a life of moral issues without meeting temptation, without facing the possibility of sin, without experience of inner struggle. In this immemorial collision conscience is born, knowledge of good and evil is formed. This moral crisis, whether in the case of the individual or of the race, is both a fall and a rise. Once having chosen by an act of will a course of life, once having left the happy unconscious state of instinctive innocence behind, one can never go back to it. For better or for worse the race to which we belong, the man we know, has come to a stage of life on a level of moral choices. We no longer blindly obey the push of unreflective instinct. We have entered upon a career of struggle and suffering, of defeats as well as of victories, of aspiration and ideals in conflict with lower impulses. Our world is henceforth a checker-board world of black and white.

But just as surely this stage of moral collision is a rise, is an advance. There is no other way to "make man." It is through the purgatorial process of life like ours that the meaning and distinction of sin and holiness stand clearly forth. In order to be *good* a man must learn to prefer a higher course when an alternative lower one confronts him. He cannot be pushed into goodness. He must love goodness and feel its attraction and choose it. This great chance at the highest kind of life has come to us, with all its moral dignity—but it carries with it, too, the momentous possibilities of failure, defeat and loss. We are, in short, in a world where sin is an appalling fact, a world which no rose-water remedy will cure; and the evangelical is right in emphasizing the awfulness of sin and the disease of will that inheres in it, but he neglects to take account of the mighty spiritual forces which are planted in the very structure of man's soul, and he ignores the diviner aspects of life which are rooted and grounded in the moral nature of struggling, suffering humanity.

A grave misinterpretation somewhat similar to this misinterpretation of human nature runs through the whole system. It is constructed to fit a dualistic universe, a two-world scheme. Its treatment of Christ, its theory of Scripture, its conception of salvation, are all worked out to correspond with that unsatisfactory and inadequate two-compartment view of the world, and it fails to tally with the expanded and transformed world-view which has become the intellectual inheritance of this age. The central truths of religion, if they are to guide the will and form the character, control the impulses and be an inspiration to the ideals of men to-day, must be interpreted and formulated in harmony with all that we know to be true about man and about the world in which his life is bound up. It is the prophetic task of the religious leaders of our time to work out this adjustment, and to re-express in vital, convincing form the eternal truth about God and the soul, about Christ and man's salvation.

All that is true and great at the heart of the evangelical movement, and there is much that is true and great, must be conserved. The overwhelming sense of God, the staggering consciousness of sin, the transforming discovery of divine grace, the joyous assurance of forgiveness which characterize the great evangelicals are essential features of any profound spiritual experience. The insistence which one finds in the evangelical movement that religion be given a first place in life, that Christ shall have the supremacy, must be maintained. The exalted conviction which belongs to the evangelical faith that religion has to do with a world of transcendent reality and affects eternal destiny must not be allowed to drop away. No religion which is merely subjective, a one-sided affair and unattached to any super-temporal reality, will ever build the spiritual world we ask for. But all these central features of a live religion can be conserved in a spiritual movement that is essentially mystical much better than in a system which is essentially static and forensic as the one under consideration tends to become. If we are determined to find sources of vital growth and expanding power we must keep close to the actual elemental nature of the soul itself. If we are to have theology we must have a theology which conforms through and through with sound psychology and which squares at every point with verified truth in all departments.

There can, I think, be little question that the mystical basis of religion fits better than any other with what we know of the verified facts of life. I mean by "mystical basis" that feature of religion which attaches to the soul's direct testimony of relation with God. Our senses, in the last resort, *i.e.* in ultimate analysis, deal only with molecular motion. We do not, and cannot, "perceive" in the outward world any reality to which we could properly apply the word God. Nor will any "process" of inner consciousness by itself ever give the experience of an absolute and eternal reality to which we could ascribe the ineffable Name. But notwithstanding that necessary concession, there is something inherently bound

up with all self-conscious experience which has inevitable reference to a transcendent super-temporal reality. We cannot live and think without passing beyond the finite objects of sense and the ephemeral processes of consciousness and without fusing ourselves in with a larger inclusive whole of reality which abides and endures. If we were sundered from this larger whole, if we lost our connection and correspondence, we should lose ourselves and all we know. We cannot *live* a moment without being more than ourselves. We cannot go forward toward the life we want without projecting the tentacles of the soul on into some firm reality beyond and yet within our experience. We make all our advances by trusting the soul's "invincible surmise." We keep seeking God because we are all the time finding Him.

Then there are those rarer fusing, vitalizing experiences which come oftener to some than to others, when the larger whole of reality with which we are always in contact seems to become resurgent and to flood back into our inner channels and to charge us with unwonted vital energy. Even more important, perhaps, is the evidence of God which comes in quiet ways to the soul through the moral and spiritual tasks of a lifetime, and through the slow formation of a higher nature within that triumphs over lower impulses and instincts. We become, without quite knowing how, the finite organs of a Spirit like ourselves, and yet unspeakably vaster, who is the environment of all awakened spirits and the Life of all spiritual lives. We may not be able to *prove* to others that we have found God in these experiences, but while we feel the floods of life and the tides of love we do not care much for proofs.

It is here, on this testimony of the soul, that the religion of the mystical type is founded. What is wrong with man it finds revealed within, and what is divinely possible for man it finds, too, implied in the intimations of the soul. And with this sure clue it turns to history, which is the record of that continuous humanity of which we are each fragmentary units. In this wider life of man

the revelation of sin and of divine grace which is in part unveiled within us becomes more luminous. Prophets give us personal testimonies which far out-top our own, but which at the same time confirm our own discovery. One historical Figure stands out in solitary splendour. In Jesus Christ we have the supreme confirmation of our most significant inner intimations and discoveries. The conviction of connection with God reached in Him its highest certainty. He felt Himself to be the instrument and organ of divine manifestation in unparalleled degree. Grace, forgiving, suffering, love, which was incarnate in Him, rose upon His consciousness as the central fact in the nature and character of God, and He made it in His representative life and death so vivid and dynamic that it is burned forever into the spiritual consciousness of those who love Him and follow Him.

All the theological terms which characterize religious movements in history are more or less partial and one-sided. They merely give emphasis — often excessive emphasis—to one aspect of truth and overlook or neglect other aspects quite as important as the one that is singled out and starred. Moreover these terms are too apt to become party watchwords and battle-cries within the Church. "Evangelical" *or* "mystical" is an unnecessary alternative. A complete religion, a full-rounded Christianity will be both evangelical and mystical, provided, of course, that the term evangelical is used in its deeper and truer sense. Narrow, partial, exclusive forms and formulations must pass away and give place to types of religion which express in ever-growing degree the whole meaning of life and the whole range of truth. The richer and more inclusive types, just because they are rich and inclusive, bear clear testimony to the spiritual potentiality of man, to the essential junction of the human and the divine, to the prophetic and oracular gifts of the soul, and at the same time they recognize and proclaim the unique revelation of God in Scripture, and the supreme unveiling of His nature and character in that one perfect personal Life which was both divine and human.

The pages which follow this Introduction will not be mainly concerned with theological views. They will aim rather to present the complex life, the social ideals, the currents and movements of a religious body in England and America, working out its spiritual hopes and shaping its destiny during the last two centuries. The only reason for concentrating here upon somewhat abstract aspects of thought, when more interesting matters were at hand, is that historically these abstract aspects have by the actors themselves been raised to a place of central importance, and have been dominating factors in the unfolding movement of Quaker history. Life itself is concrete, and religion, in so far as it is a vital affair, is a concrete way of life with unique and original features in each individual life. It cannot be reduced to its general and abstract forms without a loss of the essential features that make it a thing of interest and wonder. But these concrete and personal lives of ours, with all their dramatic and unique possibilities, are immensely influenced and shaped by the abstract principles, the theories of truth and the systems of thought, which we adopt as a working basis of life and action. Here is the key to much of the tragedy and to some of the comedy of life. Systems of thought are like cathedrals, very slowly built up, and when once they are wrought into shape they have an abiding and persisting character. They do not yield at once in the presence of new discoveries, they do not alter easily to fit the complex facts of inner experience and of growing, expanding truth. They *hold* even when they have become inadequate to express the richer concrete life of a new time. For that reason one cannot write the history of a people as it really was without serious consideration of what has been called "the universe of thought" under which the people were living when they made their history. Life is not a series of dots, a shower of shot, nor is it a sporadic, capricious, unordered manifold of incidents. It is an integral and unified affair, controlled and directed by ideas and purposes which bind it together, and organize it into a significant whole. The binding

principles and unifying purposes are therefore momentous matters which cannot be neglected for the sake of cataloguing the bright and interesting purple patches which attract attention and make the more abstract features seem dull and dreary.

# CHAPTER I

## TYPICAL LEADERS DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

QUAKERISM began its history with an expectation of large and growing spiritual conquest. Its first leaders believed that they had found at last the basis and principle of a universal religion. They thought of the propagation of the message as the most normal feature of their lives—the very mission and end of their existence. They were possessed by a great faith, they were filled with enthusiasm and had an *élan* of spirit which made them almost irresistible among groups of people prepared for their message, while at the same time they were able to stand any amount of opposition and the most stubborn persecution. During this creative stage Quakerism had an important external history. It was carrying the truth to the world in which it lived ; it was in contact with its environment at a multitude of points, and it was fighting for the recognition of the individual's right and privilege to worship God in spirit and in truth untrammelled, and for the still larger liberty to practise a way of life in conformity with the divine revelation made to the soul. During the difficult battle-period Quakerism, to be comprehended, must be studied in relation to external events. Its inner and outer life form one unified story. In England that stage was coming to an end by the opening of the eighteenth century. The continuation of the aggressive period of Quakerism in America through a longer period has already been told in *The Quakers in the American Colonies*. We are confronted here, in the early part of this volume, however, with a different type

of history from that of the creative period. The concessions which the state had made to Quakerism in its aggressive epoch brought about subtle and important transformations in the entire character of the Society. Security, ease and privilege did what persecution could never have done. They eliminated the electric enthusiasms of the movement and made it a different type of thing.

Already by the middle of the eighteenth century the most deeply concerned Friends of the time felt that the glory of Quakerism had passed away. They were conscious of a painful contrast between the existing present and the glowing past. They idealized somewhat the period of their forefathers and of their own youth, and they were over-critical of their age, but it was an unescapable fact that a profound change had taken place, and that the Quakerism of 1752 was quite unlike the dynamic Quakerism of 1652. Samuel Neale (1729–1792) bewails in his Diary the "decline" which confronts him as he moves from place to place in his religious travels. He says with considerable emotion :

> It makes my heart ache when I consider the degeneracy from the true begotten zeal, which was about fifty years ago when the ancients lived that endured the heat of the day. . . . How is the defence or wall of our profession broken down, I mean the Discipline of the Church,—what a mixture is there in the seat of judgment.[1]

What this good man misses in the Quakerism of his day is the strict application of Discipline. He is depressed over certain definite situations which occur in meetings and in Quaker homes, and he has his eye upon the characteristic marks which distinguished Friends from other Christians. The more important differences which existed between the Quakers of his day and those of the creative period more or less escaped his attention. He was for preserving a thing already made ; they were for creating something which their souls believed God intended to produce in the world.

[1] *Life of Samuel Neale* (London, 1845), pp. 30, 31.

There was, I am inclined to think, no striking decrease of zeal. There was rather a change of aim and purpose towards which the zeal was directed. We shall see in the succeeding chapters that men and women still existed in large numbers who devoted life and all they had to the cause of Quakerism with no limit to the degree of their sacrifice. Their fundamental conception of the Quaker mission had altered. Their outlook was a different one, but they were still ready to die daily for their faith.

It has been often pointed out that the second period of a religious movement is on a distinctly lower level of thought and power than the first, and the leaders of the second era are frequently called "epigones," which means "unworthy successors." It is no doubt true that the Christian leaders of the second century after Christ seem to show a marked decrease of insight and constructive power when compared with the apostolic group. It is equally true in the history of the Franciscan movement that the second group falls below the first. The evidence of decline is even more marked in the case of the successors to Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin.

It is, however, not quite fair to call the later followers of the first leaders of these movements—and the same is true of the Quaker movement—"unworthy successors." Two points in this connection must be kept clearly in mind. In the first place great religious epochs are due to the rare combination of an individual genius and a long prepared and matured social environment. The time is ripe and the man for the time arrives. Then something momentous and significant occurs. That situation cannot be repeated. It is unique. We may applaud it or oppose it, but we cannot hope to reproduce it. The persons who follow on later are usually not geniuses—geniuses do not come in close succession! The later work of direction and organization is bound to be carried on, if carried on at all, by ordinary rather than by extraordinary persons, and they must do their work, too, in an altered environment. That mysterious *rapport*

which exists between the creative leader and his expectant age does not usually continue into the later time. It is just the difference between rowing with the current, or rowing, if not against it, at least in water that adds of itself no propulsion.

Then, secondly, there is the added psychological reason for a decline of power. The adoption and maintenance of ideas, views and truths, which somebody else has discovered, never produce the same release of energy, the same propulsive force, as does the creative discovery of them. The birth-process of truth has a power all its own. It raises and magnifies even little men. There is a dynamic quality in inspiration which can hardly be overestimated. When lives, even of the ordinary sort, are kindled and swept by pentecostal fires they can do the impossible. Those remarkable inner forces which William James once called "the energies of men" are liberated and put into operation to a degree not known in normal lives that are ordered by routine and habit. The persons who guide affairs in the habit-stage of a movement may be of fully as large calibre as most of those who assisted in the creative stage; they may be every bit as consecrated and as concentrated in purpose as were those who shared the original impulse. Nevertheless they are doomed to be called "epigones," and they are sure to reveal a smaller degree of enthusiasm and energy, and to be less interesting than their forerunners —unless peradventure they, too, are creative in their turn and raise their movement to a new stage instead of merely transmitting the momentum of the past.

The student of the period of Quaker history now before us soon becomes impressed with the feeling that the greatest visible product of the movement is to be found in the typical persons whose lives have been formed through the faith and ideals of the Society. Theology, in the proper sense of the word, has never been a Quaker concern. Nothing monumental in this sphere marks the movement. It has made few great contributions to religious literature. It has produced a unique form of

democratic organization, offering the widest scope for individual liberty and yet rendered peculiarly safe and conservative by the restraints of corporate action, group-custom and accumulated habit. But this method of organization is, after all, only one of many varieties of "independency" which came into operation in the later stages of the Reformation, and it has not made much practical appeal to other religious bodies. One cannot maintain the claim that Quakerism since its first epoch has been distinguished in the world either for its body of ideas or for its creative genius. Its distinctive mission as a Society is mystical and prophetic. It must be judged by the way in which it has borne its testimony to the reality of God and by the way in which it has been the organ of the revelation of the Spirit. That sort of mission is, as I have said, a difficult one to interpret. It does not lend itself to the usual historical method. It cannot be brought out by a description of events or by a detailed account of facts. It can be told only in terms of life and personality. It can be appreciated and translated only through the persons who have been the bearers and organs of it. We can best find what Quakerism of this quiet inward type means at the flowering points where it shows itself in the saintly life. Mystical religion is always elusive and hard to catch. It loses its rich flavour and almost its essence when it is reduced to words in a book. It is real and full of meaning only when it is expressed and revealed in living persons. The external history of the Friars Minor, in somewhat the same way, is a very different thing from the experience of God and the revelation of Him in the life of St. Francis the founder. So, too, eighteenth-century Quaker history as an external affair seems to many dull and uninteresting. Its warm and quick inner stream, however, is a precious thing, and if we can discover it and suggest its quality through the life and spirit of its most characteristic men and women, that will tell the story in the truest way. There is, we shall discover, a marked difference between the prevailing type of Quaker saint in the eighteenth century and the

type of the leading Friend in the nineteenth century, and I shall endeavour to interpret both in different chapters at the beginning and the end of this book. The spiritual leaders in this first period were almost entirely free from intellectual problems and undisturbed by doubt and questioning. They took the inward light as an absolutely settled fact. Within the sphere of their own souls God was to them indubitably revealed. They seldom ask *how*. That question Barclay and their forefathers have answered for them. The age of controversy is, for the most part, over. They do not read the disturbing books of their generation. Hobbes, Locke and Leibnitz are unknown to them.[1] They live largely in a world of their own, and, like the bees, they visit only the flowers that have their kind of honey. They all pass through a religious crisis which marks the birth of their personal conviction, but when once the reality of the light of Christ within them is settled to their own satisfaction, they take the fact for granted henceforth with as little doubt as they feel for the existence of the external visible world.

There is hardly more indication of interest in politics than in the intellectual problems of the period. One would not discover from reading Quaker Journals that Walpole existed, or that "Jenkins' ear" roused England to fight with Spain. The Meeting for Sufferings was awake to everything that might affect the rights and privileges of the Society, but the spiritual leaders who wrote Diaries were not concerned with the birth of "Whigs" and "Tories," or with their party policies. London Yearly Meeting during the crisis of the "South Sea Bubble" cautioned its members against "launching forth into the things of this world beyond their substance and capacities to discharge a good conscience in the performance of their promises and contracts."[2] But we look in vain in the Journals for narratives of adventure in the

[1] The Y.M. of 1729 warned its members to be very careful to "prevent their children and servants from reading such vile and corrupt books (some of which have been published of late) as manifestly tend to oppose and reject the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures and to introduce deism, atheism, and all manner of infidelity" (*Epistles*, vol. i. p. 185).

[2] *Epistles*, vol. i. p. 169.

world of financial speculation. They do none the less have important matters to tell us, and they deal with things of real interest.

I shall take Samuel Bownas as a good example of this trait of character in the early eighteenth-century Quaker leaders. His life stretches well back into the era of persecution, but he did his work of ministry in the eighteenth century. He was born in Westmorland in 1676; he grew up a fatherless boy and had a youth pinched with extreme poverty. He had "no taste for religion," and slept peacefully through the meetings which he attended. His crisis of conviction came while he was learning the trade of a blacksmith in Yorkshire, his awakening being caused by a vivid message from a young woman preacher, Anne Wilson, who fixed her eye upon him in meeting and said: "A traditional Quaker; thou comest to meeting as thou went from it the last time, and goest from it as thou came to it, but art no better for the coming; what wilt thou do in the end?"[1] As a result of this event the careless young man was reached, his conduct, and indeed his countenance, as he tells us, "was much altered." He became "another man." He felt that he had "a plain demonstration that true ministry comes from the divine light and is the result of a heavenly visitation within."

In a short time he experienced his own call to the ministry, "being experimentally sensible," he says, "of a change wrought in my mind," and "being qualified by the operation of the Spirit in myself."[2] This simple, unquestioning faith, born in his early experience, runs like a living stream through his whole life. He became an extensive traveller. He underwent persecution and hard imprisonment. He was always poor and straitened in worldly circumstances. His outward life yields no history. What could be simpler than the following autobiographical account of his way of living at the height of his career? He says:

[1] *An Account of the Life and Travels and Christian Experiences of Samuel Bownas* (London, 1795), p. 3. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 4-8

Now I had nothing to do but visit the meetings around me, which were pretty numerous: but one thing came upon me pretty much, and that was, to put myself into some business to get bread. Some proposed one way, some another. London and Bristol were both proposed, but I could not see my way to either of them; and what I should do in the country, being ignorant of farming, I saw not yet. At last it was proposed that I might with a little charge make a conveniency to make a little malt, in which, when an apprentice, I had some experience, being then used to it. I accordingly did, but my stock was very small, but some kind friends lent me some money, and I found it answer better than I had expected, so that I was encouraged to proceed; and in about three years' time I found it answered very well, so that I went on with pleasure, and took great care, and was very diligent in my business, and in attending all meetings that I could reach in a morning's ride, as I found a concern so to do; and the comfort and happiness I enjoyed was great, for I could entertain my friends with a lodging and other necessaries in a plain way, which was very agreeable to us both, and most friends that came took a bed with me one or two nights, as best suited their conveniency in their journey.[1]

Notwithstanding this meagre outward life, partly perhaps in consequence of it, Bownas had a great soul and a rich inward life. He is frequently amazed at himself. He finds it difficult to understand how his numerous messages are formed within him, where his wisdom comes from or how his work brings such evident spiritual fruit. With the *naïveté* of a real saint he writes:

I was filled with admiration at so uncommon a supply of new doctrine every day, which gave me great cause to be more and more humble; and when some friends would speak in favour of such an opportunity, or branch of doctrine, it would give me a shock, lest by any of these unwary commendations, I should take to myself that honour which was due to the Father of Spirits, and so fall into a robbery unawares.[2]

Again in later life he had such "an uncommon enlargement" while speaking to the meeting on ministry in London that he concluded from it that this was to be his last message to them, and that another such opening will

[1] *An Account of the Life and Travels and Christian Experiences of Samuel Bownas* (London, 1795), p. 113.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 157.

never come to him.[1] He was extremely sensitive to the real condition of a meeting. He knew at once when a religious life was "dwarfish," or when a meeting was "living in form and letter," and he was quick to discover "the root of true religion." He was even more sensitive to feel his own condition, and to note the pointings of duty within himself. Reviewing an extensive religious visit in Ireland, he remarks that he was strengthened both inwardly and outwardly for the laborious work, and that he cannot remember

> . . . having left anything undone in that nation, save something I had to say in the men's meeting at Dublin, but their hasty breaking up prevented it, which gave me uneasiness for some weeks after, and I remark it here for a caution to others; for I missed such an opportunity as I could never more expect to have, and this added to my uneasiness. Thus I saw that my fear of breaking in upon the meeting, and hindering their business, made me lose my time, so that I came off with a burden upon my mind.[2]

Up to the very end of his life, which occurred in 1753, his ministry was "powerful and lively." He was afraid, as he saw the bounds of his life narrowing with age and infirmity, that he should grow tedious and burdensome in his preaching, but he still found that he was "helped and strengthened" from within and "came off beyond expectation." "I endeavoured," he humbly says, "in secret to be still, waiting in patience with fervent prayer, that I might be preserved in the simplicity of the gospel, to appear just as truth [*i.e.* the divine light] assisted." His prayer was plainly answered. He accomplished a large spiritual work both in Great Britain and America. He reunited divided meetings. He awakened and convinced the unconcerned. He visited all the Quaker meetings in both continents and edified them, and he continued to grow and advance to the end of his life. "I was much enlarged," he says near the close of his career, "on the progressive advancement in a

[1] *An Account of the Life and Travels and Christian Experiences of Samuel Bownas* (London, 1795), p. 173.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 177.

living and saving faith, which is the very life of true religion."[1]

It is all a very simple story. The life of Bownas furnishes no surprises, no great collisions, little that is dramatic. But he is certainly a saint and a luminous specimen of the inner spirit of Quakerism at the opening of the period which I am studying.

John Richardson is another humble but beautiful character whose life stretches across from the time of the first publishers of truth into this later period. His range of influence was not as wide as was that of Samuel Bownas, but his experience was no less real and deep, and his first-hand discovery of God seemed to him beyond any question. He was born in Yorkshire about 1666, and as a boy he *met with* God's inward appearance in his soul, and felt the witness arise in his inward man.[2] He says that he *experimentally* found the Love of God and was *stayed* by it in all his trials and temptations.[3] It would be difficult to find a more simple story of developing youth or a more restricted and uneventful life than his, and yet the guiding hand of God seems in it, and a real preparation appears to be going forward as we get glimpses of the stages in the development of this rural saint.

He had a "stammering tongue," and though he used all the endeavours which lay in his power he could not overcome the physical obstacle, so that public ministry seemed naturally impossible for him. But he was convinced that the God who healed his soul could also heal his body, and he says that when he "touched the Skirt of His blessed Truth and Power," he found "true healing Virtue, even," he adds, "to my tongue, to my own admiration, so that I did not only speak plain in the Testimony [message] which the Lord gave me to bear, but I also spoke plain in my common intercourse with men."[4] He tells us that he had "times of comfortable enjoyment of the living presence of God," and there is

[1] *An Account of the Life and Travels and Christian Experiences of Samuel Bownas* (London, 1795), p. 193.
[2] *An Account of the Life of John Richardson* (Phila., 1783), p. 9.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 14.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 33.

evidence that the power of his life and ministry steadily enlarged. He was a hand-loom weaver by trade, with skill also to repair clocks and watches. He opened a little shop for this work in Bridlington, being divinely led, as he believed, to settle there when he was twenty-seven. The witness of God followed.

"The Lord," he says, "began to work mightily, especially amongst the young Friends, so that in a few years many had their mouths opened in testimony for the Lord, and a fine Spring of heavenly Ministry was in that Monthly Meeting. . . . Truth did so mightily prosper and Friends grew so in the Ministry that it became a proverb that Bridlington was become a School of the Prophets."[1]

He not only became a quickening, kindling influence upon the spirits of the young, but he helped materially to strengthen and perfect the organization and discipline of the meetings to which he belonged, and, though a man of such humble life, he became a genuine successor to the fathers and founders of the Society. A great mystical experience came over him, a few years after he settled at Bridlington and had married his greatly beloved Priscilla Cannaby. He was in the field, near the sea, on a morning without clouds, in deep meditation and "in a heavenly frame of mind," when he suddenly found himself

". . . swallowed up in the heavenly and inward presence of the Lord, and," he says, "a bright cloud came down and covered me, or caught me up into it; so whether I was standing, walking, or set upon the ground, or carried up into the cloud in the body or out of the body, I know not to this day; yet Fear and Reverence, with bowing of Soul, did possess me before the great Majesty."[2]

A new unction henceforth seemed to be upon him and his ministry became very moving and convincing. The greatest event in his life was his extensive religious visit through the meetings of Friends in America. I have told in my *Quakers in the American Colonies* the remarkable story of his constructive spiritual work in the island

[1] *An Account of the Life of John Richardson* (Phila., 1783), p. 43.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 47, 48.

of Nantucket.[1] But, whether in America or in the quiet rural country about Kirby Moorside in Yorkshire, where he eventually settled, this good man was always a power for righteousness and truth. He lived to be eighty-seven, dying in 1753, and when he passed out of their fellowship his Friends of the local meeting bore testimony that he continually "appeared more and more heavenly-minded, and seemed to grow in the life of religion."[2]

Thomas Story lived well on into my period, dying in 1742, but his work was almost entirely done before 1725, and he properly belongs among the earlier group.[3] John Fothergill's life (1676–1744) covers nearly the same period as Thomas Story's, but, as he continued vigorous until near the end of his life, he made a large contribution to the spiritual power of Quakerism in this middle period. His *Journal* is not very rich in material that reveals his life; it is mainly an objective and fragmentary account of his travels, especially of his three American journeys. He was, however, a rare soul, and the true spiritual progenitor of his two greater sons, Samuel and Dr. John Fothergill. These Fothergill men are excellent illustrations of the inner life of Quakerism during the period when it had almost no outer history. There is in them all a remarkable quality of *purity*, while Samuel and Dr. John show in marked degree that trait which a friend of Brother Lawrence called "spaciousness of mind." The father was so tremblingly humble and so sensitively conscientious that he is a good specimen case of that "lowly obedience" which characterized all these early Quaker saints. "I was humbled," he says, "in deep travail to be and to do what Truth would have me, be the Event as to myself what it might."[4] But so distressed was he in respect to his early call in the ministry, and over his fear that he might say either less or more than was directly

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 125, 126.
[2] Testimony of Guisbrough Monthly Meeting.
[3] See *Second Period of Quakerism*, pp. 423-425 and 466-469.
[4] *An Account of the Life and Travels of John Fothergill* (London, 1752), p. 18.

given him by the Spirit to say, that he was "overset by sore tossings."

"For some months," he says, "I could not either eat or sleep much, but was often alone in the fields, both day and night, mourning under a load of inward sorrow and deep fear, lest I should be a castaway; but by degrees I was brought to a desire after stillness, and a patient waiting for the saving help of God to appear; that if happily the blessed Saviour might arise and rebuke those distressing waves which lay heavy upon my soul, occasioning a visible declension of my health."[1]

His fundamental trouble was his sense of awe in the presence of God, his excessive consciousness of his littleness. Prayer seemed to him "exceedingly awful," and even after he succeeded in "obeying Truth," to the extent of uttering "the distinct openings of Light and Life" that were given to him, he yet could not open his mouth "in supplication to the infinite Holy One in publick assemblies." But God dealt tenderly with him and finally renewed his strength to "comply with the Motions of Life in this respect, but still with inexpressible fear and awfulness."[2]

The dear man also felt great exercise of mind over "being involved in temporal concerns," for fear that the occupations which supplied his outward food might, he says, "hinder me from true inward retiring often to feel the Life of Truth for the daily supply of my soul." He enjoyed, however, "labouring with his hands in the Creation" on his beautiful Wensleydale fields, and he eventually learned how to get the supplies for both inward and outward needs, and when "a drawing" came to him to go forth on the Lord's work he was immediately ready to leave his "labour in the Creation," and to become an instrument for the Spirit. He was not a robust and virile saint. He was to the last a shrinking and trembling saint, but nothing in the universe could daunt this humble man or affright him when he was sure of his call, and in the way of obedience to the divine voice.

John Fothergill's son Samuel (1715–1772) stands in

[1] *An Account of the Life and Travels of John Fothergill* (London, 1752), p. 19. [2] *Ibid.* p. 23.

the very front of the list of the pillar Friends of the eighteenth century. He possessed in a high degree the traits of mind and nature which marked the Fothergill family—refinement, insight, breadth, originality, grace and tact. To these qualities in Samuel's case was added rare sensitiveness to inward intimations. He did not easily adjust himself as a youth to the somewhat stern requirements of the Quaker system, and without intending to be rebellious he drifted on into what later seemed to him a life of sin and wickedness. He occasioned much grief to his tender-minded father, and almost broke his heart. In fact when John Fothergill left his home in 1736 for his long itinerant service in America he separated from his son with farewell words which must either have melted him to repentance or have hardened him still further. "And now, son Samuel," he said, "farewell!—farewell!—and unless it be as a changed man, I cannot say that I have any wish ever to see thee again."[1]

Not many months had passed before the son had become "the changed man" the father had wished for, and when once he turned his face toward the light he threw himself with all his intense nature into the life of truth and righteousness. He soon began to speak in public ministry, and quickly revealed the beautiful gift which steadily matured with his growing years. The story is told that when his father returned from America in 1738 he arrived in York after the morning meeting had begun, and so entered it late, before he had yet seen his family. After a time of silence he stood up to speak, and had not proceeded very far with his message when he stopped and informed the meeting that his way was closed, his message taken from him and, as he believed, given to another. Whereupon he sat down. Almost immediately his son Samuel arose, took up the same subject and developed it in a weighty and impressive manner, presented with unusual power, which moved the father to a flood of joyous tears.[2]

[1] *Memoirs and Letters of Samuel Fothergill* (London, 1843), p. 38.
[2] The tradition is variously reported. See *Memoirs*, p. 71.

Not long after this period James Gough, of Ireland, a good judge both of men and of ministry, came into fellowship with Samuel Fothergill, and heard him preach. He made this interesting comment in his *Journal*:

Here (on a visit in England) I met with Samuel Fothergill, then young in the ministry, but even then appearing with that solemnity, brightness and gospel authority, as gave Friends lively hopes of his proving, as he did, through the successive stages of his life, a bright and shining light; a vessel of honour indeed; of eminent service in the Church of Christ.[1]

Samuel Fothergill's love of the truth broke through all that he said or wrote. He lived continually in the purpose and desire to make his words and his external actions fit the realities which stood for truth in his deepest experience. "I earnestly entreat thee," he wrote to a Friend in 1750, "to abide steadfast in the truth; feel after it; live in it and it will never fail thee."[2] It is more than an abstraction about which he is concerned. He is talking of a way of life to be lived. He is emphasizing the double point that there is truth to be discovered, and that there is also truth to be genuinely lived and expressed. Intensely as he desired to see his beloved wife who was the apple of his eye, he would not allow this human affection to turn him from the work which he believed "truth" had laid upon him.

"I dare not dissipate my strength," he wrote to his wife from Colonial America, "by one wistful look towards my native land, beloved wife and tender friends, but steadfastly and honestly labour here according to the ability given; circumscribing all my views within the bounds of duty and resigning all my will, power and faculties unto the will of Heaven."[3]

How tenderly he loved the wife from whom he had his long American separation may be seen in these words of his to her, words which still throb with true affection: "My heart is renewedly touched with the love of God; *in that* I am bound up with thee and near thee in an indissoluble covenant; may our dwelling be evermore in it."[4]

[1] Quoted in *Memoirs*, p. 78. [2] *Ibid.* p. 121. [3] *Ibid.* p. 220.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 99. The details of Samuel Fothergill's labours in America are given in *The Quakers in the American Colonies.*

His love for John Churchman was very strong and tender. "I enjoy the company of thy spirit," he told Churchman in a letter, and he endeavoured to make his plans so as to be for a longer time with that finely harmonized man, but he was "deprived of the satisfaction" he had "strongly hoped for," as he heard his Master's voice calling him in another direction, and his love of truth held him to the line of duty.[1] Fothergill, notwithstanding his extraordinary depth of warm inward experience, shows the prevailing tendency of his time to refer to God in abstract terms. "Keep near the Fountain Head"; "wait for instruction from the Mind of Truth"; "acquire a meetness to appear before the throne of unmixed Purity"; "keep the heart bowed before the all-sufficient Help for the support of His Ancient Arm"; "the strong support of ever-blessed Help is near"; "I would not be separated from the Holy Presence"; "the continued favour of the never-failing Fountain of all good"—these are some of the expressions by which he avoids naming the personal Name. This tendency was due partly to awe, reverence and great humility of spirit, but it was also partly due to the habit of mind which characterized this period. God was conceived as a Principle rather than as a Person, as a causal Force rather than as an intimate Companion.

Samuel Fothergill's greatest service—if there can be any service greater than that of exhibiting the beauty of a rightly fashioned life—was his constructive leadership in the work of reforming the Discipline of the Society during the middle years of the century and of perfecting the organization of the body. It was due to his "concern" that the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders was established, and he was one of the little inner circle of Friends who guided the Society through the crisis of 1760, of which more will be said in coming chapters.

The saint of the Church who wins official beatification or canonization must no doubt be more than *good* in the ordinary sense. There must be in the life and action some distinct evidence of supernatural grace. The

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 141.

admission to the calendar implies that the person to whom that distinction is accorded has, in some marked way, surpassed the human limit and level. The "saint" must belong to the narrow exclusive class of geniuses, must be a "mutation" from the ordinary species, and so must be novel and unique, a marvellous specimen of goodness, a revelation of superabundant holiness.

The leaders whom I am describing as the most important makers of the Quakerism of their time were not saints in this peculiar sense. They were only outstanding representatives of the common type which composed the entire Society. They were not geniuses. They possessed no unique supernatural powers. They were unusual, if at all, only in the fact that they were extraordinarily dedicated to what they called "the truth," which is always their phrase for the ideals of the Society, somewhat as Hegel used "truth" for his philosophical system. All they were and all they had was laid on the altar of their cause. They counted nothing too hard to do and no price too costly to pay, if thereby they could advance "the truth." Their lives, as we have seen, and as we shall further see, were extremely simple, their stock of ideas was limited and meagre, their intellectual contribution was small and their artistic contribution was nothing at all. But there was an unmistakable mark of grace upon them, an irresistible conviction of God in their souls, and a consecration to their mission which all together avail to make what would otherwise be a little person, a really great person. To have all one's powers, even though they may be ordinary powers, massed and unified toward a single end is to be an individual who must be reckoned with in any walk of life.

That focussed, fused and unified type of life is a clear characteristic of the personal leaders who stand out as the impressive figures in the Society of Friends at the middle of the eighteenth century. This type got very good expression in two men, who, though not unique, are excellent specimens: Thomas Chalkley and John Griffith. "Few have lived so universally beloved and respected

among us" is the Testimony of Friends to the memory of Thomas Chalkley. He was born in Southwark, London, in 1675, enjoyed the guidance of devout parents, attended Richard Scoryer's famous school, experienced remarkable dealings of God in his "tender years," and found himself led out into the ministry of the gospel while still very young. He even visited America "in the love of the gospel" when he was only twenty-two years old. From that early date until he laid down his life in West Indian Tortola in 1741 he was an almost incessant traveller. There is no hot-house beauty in the saintliness of Thomas Chalkley, it is rather the out-door variety that grows in the rain and storm.

In his twenty-fourth year he married Martha Betterton, "a religious young woman," whom he "entirely loved," and soon after marriage he felt it to be his "duty to go over and live in America." The entire Society of Friends in America, including Bermuda and the West Indian islands, now became his parish, while he also revisited the English meetings and travelled extensively through Holland and Germany, searching out and visiting the small mystical groups in the continental countries. For means of livelihood he engaged in West Indian trade as ship-owner and master. It was an odd occupation for a Quaker minister and a saint, but he demonstrated the fact that the spirit can sanctify almost any serviceable trade. Whittier is quite right in calling him, in his famous *Snow Bound* passage, "Gentlest of skippers, rare sea saint!" Few Friends surely have been so often in imminent danger or have lived so continually near neighbour to peril. Chalkley's *Journal* is full of thrilling episodes and, though containing many dull stretches, is very readable.[1] Whittier stars it as one of his most loved books.

> Oh, far away beneath New England's sky,
> Even when a boy,
> Following my plough by Merrimac's green shore,
> His simple record have I pondered o'er
> With deep and quiet joy.[2]

[1] *A Collection of Works of Thomas Chalkley, to which is prefixed the Journal of his Life* (London, 1751).

[2] "Chalkley Hall."

He also selected "Chalkley's *Journal*, old and quaint," as one of his prime favourites in the long winter evenings.

One can understand how a boy would like a narrative such as the following, describing how Chalkley's life was providentially saved when the ship's company, in desperate straits for food, were discussing the prospect of casting lots to determine which man among them should be killed and eaten. Chalkley says:

> To stop their murmuring, I told them they should not need to cast lots, which was usual in such cases, which of us should die first, for I would freely offer up my life to do them good. One said, "God bless you! I will not eat any of you." Another said, "He would die before he would eat any of me": and so said several. I can truly say on that occasion, at that time, my life was not dear to me, and that I was serious and ingenuous in my proposition, and as I was leaning over the side of the vessel, thoughtfully considering my proposal to the company, and looking in my mind to him that made me, a very large dolphin came up towards the top or surface of the water and looked me in the face; and I called the people to put a hook into the sea, and take him, for here is one come to redeem me (I said to them). And they put a hook into the sea, and the fish readily took it, and they caught him. He was longer than myself. I think he was about six feet long, and the largest that I ever saw. This plainly showed us that we ought not to distrust the providence of the Almighty. The people were quieted by this act of Providence, and murmured no more. We caught enough to eat plentifully of, till we got into the capes of Delaware.[1]

The good man had many deep trials, losses, sorrows and testings, but they all ministered to purify his nature and to refine his spirit. He was able to understand all types of men, and, as a result of his wide human experience, he was peculiarly fitted to interpret the gospel to a larger and more complex circle than was possible for most Quaker ministers. On his voyages he often wrote messages and epistles especially for the young, and everywhere and always he bore the work of the Society on his heart. As soon as, by the favour of Providence, he was spared from the sea to have a brief sojourn in his

[1] Chalkley's *Journal*, p. 87.

attractive home in Frankford by the Delaware, he at once began to revisit his beloved meetings and to radiate the light that was in him.

> And words of fitness to his lips were given.
> And strength as from above.[1]

Less interesting but still more influential was the life of John Griffith. He was born in 1713 of Welsh parents, "who had the substance of religion in themselves." His father was "a living minister and a heavenly-minded man," and the boy, living in a spiritual atmosphere, was favoured very early with "heart-melting visitations of God's love." When only thirteen he migrated to Pennsylvania and grew up with the new colonial meetings of that province. He was at times in his youth "wonderfully overshadowed with the universal love of God," and under these coverings of divine life and love he was drawn into public ministry when he was twenty-one. He was a peculiarly tender and sensitive soul and he often felt the real presence of Christ. He says, out of his own experience:

> There is no occasion at all for those who regard Christ's power as the substance of their ministry to be in any wise solicitous about words; as the lowest and most simple words are really beautiful when fitly spoken under that holy influence.[2]

He is another one of these simple child-like men, with "a single eye" to the divine light and succeeding always, without knowing how, in transcending himself and in building better than he knew. He also, like Chalkley, visited every spot where there were Friends, ran the hazards of the sea and was constantly in labours and perils. He was captured by a French privateer and underwent harrowing experiences as a prisoner of war, turning all adventures that came to him into spiritual assets. His comment upon his state of mind in London Yearly Meeting which he attended in 1748, after his escape from France and Spain, shows very well the spirit of this pure man. He writes:

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[1] Whittier's "Chalkley Hall."
[2] *Journal of John Griffith* (London, 1779), p. 28.

Many brethren were met from divers parts of the nation. Amongst whom, I looked upon myself as a mere child, having much fear and reasoning in my mind, lest I should dishonour the Great Master's cause, and discover my great weakness, as the same appeared in my own view, to those pillars in the church, and experienced servants in the Lord's work. But He in great mercy condescended to my very low estate, and regarded my humble breathings, giving me the word of life to preach, with demonstration that day, which much opened my way in the minds of friends, and was of considerable advantage to me in my future service; for very much depends on our having good place in the hearts of the faithful, and that cannot well be, until they know us.[1]

After a long period of service in Great Britain, Griffith felt his mind drawn to enter into marriage with his "endeared friend," Frances Wyatt. He returned forthwith to America, settled up his affairs there, transferred his home to England and became a living apostle of the truth, almost wholly given up to public service and living for the cause as though it were his entire life. He was not an optimist. He saw distressing defects in the Society; he found dullness and lethargy in the membership—the trail of worldliness was over many lives; meetings were often "heavy and painful." He says that he went about in his work of the gospel "often imprisoned, depressed and greatly afflicted, by means of the great unfaithfulness of many under the same profession with ourselves; being at times, on account of such, so closed up in a painful sense of death and darkness, as to be somewhat like the prophet of old, quite shut up and dumb with silence."[2] "Things were at a low ebb" is a frequent refrain. The spiritual condition in Ireland was a matter of "deep mourning and painful anxiety" to him. "The love of the world and other undue liberties" have, he believes, "greatly hurt the Society" there. He travelled from meeting to meeting in "great inward distress over the mournful declension of the Church in Ireland."[3]

Beside the general signs of worldliness and lukewarmness prevailing among Friends, he notes two specific

[1] *Journal of John Griffith* (London, 1779), p. 107.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 127. [3] *Ibid.* p. 169.

grounds for the painful exercise and travail of spirit which lie upon him as he labours for the cause. One was the prevalence of deism or free-thinking, which he sees creeping into the Society in communities where Friends mingle freely with the world, and the other was the laxity of discipline. He finds members of the Society who are "lost in a maze of error, having departed from the divine light," and he also finds many "disorderly and libertine spirits." He sees "evil winked at," "undue liberties taken," "persons who do wrong are suffered to escape judgment or censure," while "weakness and a cloud of darkness" rest upon and cover meetings as well as individuals.[1]

We shall see in a later chapter that he had much to do with the revival and expansion of the Discipline in the middle period of his century, and he must be recognized as one of the creators of the later system of Discipline, but for the moment I am not so much concerned with sequential history as with a type of Quaker life and character. John Griffith was before everything else a holy man whose power lay altogether in his goodness of life. He walked the earth with a single aspiration—to make his soul a stainless mirror for his God. He knew both the heights and the depths. He was lifted up above measure by the revelations with which he was favoured, and he was pressed down beyond all expression by the baptisms which he experienced.[2] For more than forty years his outward life and all his powers were dedicated to the Society. He received no return, he looked for no reward, he expected no recompense. He freely gave his all because the love of Christ constrained him. The closing words of his *Journal* are typical of his spirit and reveal both his simplicity and his undisturbed confidence. It is a fine instance of that attitude which Emerson expresses in the line,

Lowly faithful, banish fear.

Griffith simply says, as his farewell words to the reader :

[1] This impression runs through the middle part of the *Journal*.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 423.

Being now in the sixtieth year of my age, and having laboured twelve or fourteen years, at times, pretty much under the asthmatick complaint, which has caused riding to be frequently painful to the body, which difficulty age is like to increase, I expect, therefore, travelling of any considerable journies will of course cease ; and having written so much already, I here intend to lay down my pen, committing myself, and what is done, to the providence and blessing of God, in Whose power alone it is to grant patience, resignation and perseverance, to His poor helpless servants, and an increase of their gospel labours : So be it.[1]

This simple, humble, dedicated type of saint, with soul like a sensitive plate in the presence of divine Light, reaches its culmination in John Woolman (1720–1772). He owed, I believe, very much in the manner of his religious unfolding to his friend John Churchman, who was fifteen years older and who had a similar inner spirit to his own and the same extraordinary sensitiveness to guidance. Woolman shows, however, as no Friend before him in his generation to any such degree had done, a profound social and humanitarian spirit. He was dedicated, as these other men in this chapter were, to the cause of Truth, *i.e.* to the Society, but Woolman's dedication sweeps out beyond this narrow limit and includes man wherever he toils and suffers and is exploited. There are four outstanding traits of life which characterize John Woolman and which make him stand distinctly in that small group of persons who live on through all changes of custom, creed and thought. (1) He was conscious in an extraordinary degree of the presence of God revealed within him ; (2) he was as sensitive to the intimations of duty as a camera film is to the effects of light ; (3) he was instantly touched by human need and amazingly quick to see how tragically luxury, slavery and an un-Christian social order affect those who are poor and who are doomed to a life of toil ; (4) finally he succeeded by an unconscious spiritual dexterity of pen in writing in a style which reveals his soul and at the same time shows purity, simplicity, clarity and grace of expression. He had a quality of style which no other Friend of the

[1] *Journal of John Griffith*, pp. 426, 427.

eighteenth century at all matches. The extraordinary inner life here for once found beautiful words to express itself through. The style, as so often is the case, is the man. The same simplicity which characterizes the pure soul marks also the language which reveals it, and in one solitary case a Quaker Journal, by its unerring quality of style and unconscious grace, became an English classic.

Woolman's work for Negroes and for Indians has been told in *The Quakers in the American Colonies.* I shall have much to say in a later chapter of this volume of his contribution to Quaker Quietism. It is enough to say here that he is the typical and consummate flower of eighteenth-century Quakerism. "The irresistible might of meekness," which is revealed in many Quaker lives of this period, is impressively manifested in him. Childlike simplicity has nowhere, except in Francis of Assisi, a more natural and convincing expression. His crucifixion of self is so complete that he seems to belong in this particular in the apostolic class. "John Woolman is dead" were the words he heard an angel speak once when he was suffering in a great illness.

"My tongue was so dry," he says, "that I could not speak until I had moved it about and gathered some moisture, and as I lay still for a time I at length felt a Divine power prepare my mouth that I could speak, and then I said, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Then the mystery was opened and I perceived there was joy in heaven over a sinner who had repented, and that the language, 'John Woolman is dead,' meant no more than the death of my own will."[1]

That is the humble spirit whose fame has gone wherever the English language is read and spoken. He is only telling the plain truth, in his usual scrupulous exactness of phrase, when he says: "I felt a satisfactory evidence that my proceedings were not in my own will, but *under the power of the cross of Christ.*"[2] It is well that we of these later generations have been favoured to discover the

[1] *Journal*, Whittier edition, pp. 264, 265. [2] *Ibid.* p. 241.

more positive and affirmative qualities of the spiritual life, and we cannot miss even in this saintly life the defects of over-negation, but it is a gift to be devoutly thankful for that such a rare and holy life has sanctified our religious fellowship, and that one with human nature like ourselves has brought his spirit into such complete parallelism with the heavenly will, has taken up so faithfully and gladly the burden of the world's suffering, and has made the holy life so beautiful and radiant. I join with Whittier in saying:

> I have been awed and solemnized by the presence of this serene and beautiful spirit redeemed of the Lord from all selfishness.[1]

An Irish Friend who visited Woolman in 1771 wrote these sufficient words about him:

> I saw John Woolman for the first time; I take him to be a sweet, clean-spirited Friend; his unity with the true seed may be felt.[2]

One more specimen of the eighteenth-century type will be presented in the person of John Pemberton, who spent many years of his life ministering in England and Ireland, who died in the midst of his religious service on the continent of Europe, and who was throughout his life one of the most dedicated and influential ministers in the circle of the American meetings. The Pembertons held a very prominent place in the colonial history of Pennsylvania. John's grandfather, Phineas, came to the new colony the same year that William Penn came (1682). His son Israel became a wealthy merchant of Philadelphia, an important member of the provincial Assembly and clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. John (born in 1727) was the youngest of the three sons of Israel who, out of a family of ten, lived to grow up to maturity. The other two sons, Israel and James, were among the foremost leaders of affairs in Pennsylvania in the critical period preceding the Revolutionary War when Friends took the momentous step of withdrawing from

[1] Whittier's Introduction to Woolman's *Journal*, p. 49.
[2] *Life and Religious Labours of Samuel Neale* (London, 1845), p. 167.

political affairs.[1] John's life turned inward rather than outward, and while still young his mind was "measurably brought under the sanctifying operations of the Spirit of Truth." The Pemberton home was a nursery of Truth. The atmosphere of it was sweet and fragrant with spiritual religion. The father and mother lived and moved and had their being in the sphere of what Friends called "the Truth." There never was any question with them as to which interest in life was paramount. There were large business interests to consider, there were important affairs of the province to direct, but everything had to bend to the call of the Spirit, whose Kingdom was the first concern. Others compromised and adjusted, this family group was accustomed to the practice of surrendering everything else to the clear requirements of inward duty.

In early manhood John who was far from robust went to Great Britain partly to improve his health and partly to further the business interests of the family. The visit abroad proved to be the turning-point in his life, for it was at this time that he underwent "that process of gradual change and purification which was preparatory to his being made use of as an instrument of good to others and to the Church."[2] John Churchman, one of the most perfect of all the eighteenth-century Quaker saints, forerunner of John Woolman, was at this time (1750–1753) on a religious visit to Friends in England and Ireland, and a way opened unexpectedly for John Pemberton to travel with him for many months as companion. It was an epoch-making experience, and left its transforming mark ever afterward on the life and spirit of the latter, who was caught at this time in the gospel net.

The two Friends found Quakerism at a low ebb, and they went from place to place in a state of considerable depression.

[1] Isaac Sharpless has written an excellent account of James Pemberton in *Political Leaders of Provincial Pennsylvania* (New York, 1919).

[2] *Life and Travels of John Pemberton* (London, 1844), p. 4. This passage is a characteristic account of conversion as Friends of the period thought of it, and is strongly contrasted with the instantaneous conversion expected by the Methodists in their early days.

"The meetings," John Pemberton writes, "in these counties (Wiltshire, Somerset, Devonshire and Cornwall) are in general small, and lukewarmness is prevalent; yet in many places there is a hopeful seed springing among the younger sort." [1]

It was while in Cornwall that John Pemberton first broke the silence, and was strengthened to open his mouth in public testimony as a Minister. This was felt to be a great event in his life. The older Minister was deeply touched by the step which his young friend had taken, and he noted in his *Journal* that the testimony was "tender and broken" and "had a good degree of the savour of the truth." [2] The usual times of depression, dryness, emptiness and inward conflict, which characterized Ministers of this period fell in abundant measure to John Pemberton. His Diary and Letters contain many phrases like these: "For several weeks I have had to pass through a barren wilderness." "The Light of His countenance has been withdrawn." "The dragon and wild beasts seem to surround me, and darkness to overspread me." [3] He was depressed not only over his own "states," but he was even more disheartened by what seemed to him a "decline" of Quakerism. "There is much want," he writes, "of qualified members to act in the Discipline of the Church," and "a manifest declension appears." "Meetings are covered with heaviness, dryness and gloom, and the faithful few are bowed under a weight of exercise and sorrow." "A spirit of drowsiness has come over many." "Degeneracy" seems to mark the Society, and an "eclipse of the Light" appears to have overspread those who ought to be the Children of the Light. Of Ireland also he says:

> It is lamentable to behold how many there are who might have continued ornaments in our Zion who by letting their minds out by degrees after the perishing treasure of this world have eclipsed the Light in themselves. [4]

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[1] *Life and Travels of John Pemberton* (London, 1844), p. 5.
[2] *Gospel Labours of John Churchman* (London, 1781), p. 124.
[3] In a later chapter I shall study these experiences of depression.
[4] *Life and Travels*, p. 15.

Conditions were really much better than such accounts imply, because it appears in most of the Journals of this time, even those of Churchman and Pemberton, that the young people were eager and devoted; they attended meetings with great faithfulness and "truth was flowing in the bosom of many of the youth."[1]

For three years John Pemberton travelled in the service of Truth with rare and ripe John Churchman, then "in much love and tenderness" they parted, the younger man returning to his home in Philadelphia, where he kept himself as free as possible from all entanglement with the affairs of the world, tremblingly pursued the path of religious life and dedicated himself to the service of his fellow-men, especially to those who needed help and sympathy. He became one of the most devoted friends of the Indians and a loving adviser and helper of the oppressed negroes. He had a spirit that readily understood the conditions of suffering, struggling humanity, and he not only gave relief to the poor and the afflicted but, what was much better, he gave of himself to them. He travelled widely in the work of ministry among the Friends' meetings in America, always revealing a peculiar sensitiveness to inward direction and doing much by his influence to encourage utter and uncompromising devotion to truth. During the Revolution his devotion to the cause of peace was put to a severe test. He was arrested, his papers and the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings, of which he was clerk, searched and scrutinized and he himself with other Friends of like mind exiled to Virginia for many months.

In 1782 he went abroad a second time in a deep religious exercise of mind to be of service to the truth in the meetings in England and Ireland. This visit lasted until 1789, and was of extraordinary significance for the future life and power of Quakerism. His spirit was bent toward a real revival of life in the existing meetings and toward an extension of the Society in regions where it did not already have organized meetings. The most remark-

[1] *Life and Travels*, p. 24.

able part of his extension work was done in the Orkney Islands, where he reached nearly all the inhabitants with a fresh message of life. He laboured with tireless energy to propagate the truth in Scotland.

Again and again he attended the provincial Yearly Meetings which were held throughout the eighteenth century in the large Quaker centres, for increasing the spiritual life of the membership. He was generally during the seven years in attendance at the National Meeting in Ireland, and at the Yearly Meeting in London, entering deeply into all the problems of discipline and order, but contributing most to the cultivation and enlargement of the inner life of the membership. It was in every way fitting that this good man, who was possessed of an undivided passion for pure spiritual religion, should finally give his life in the cause of the truth he loved. So great were the yearnings of his soul for the growth of the good seed of the kingdom, that in 1794 he went forth on a third European journey, this time to search out and help the little mystical groups of people living in Holland and Germany, for whom the mystically inclined Friends at this time, both in England and America, had a great concern. In the course of this difficult ministry our Friend became ill, and after some weeks of serious illness, through which he was tenderly cared for, he laid down his life at Pyrmont, where a little group of German mystics had allied themselves with Friends. "I never experienced so much of the love of God in any of my journeys heretofore as I have in this," was his testimony at the end of his life. Suffering with fever and thirst, far from home and loved ones, he wrote in his diary:

> Through the adorable mercy of a gracious God, I have felt more of the incomes of His love and life-giving presence than I have experienced for a long time. I am able to make melody in my heart.[1]

And so, "wrapped up in Divine love" and delivered from all fear, this beautiful spirit, who had "waded in deep and

[1] *Life and Travels*, p. 318.

oft-repeated baptisms," went forth into the peace of the life with God. Both his life and his ministry, as his Friends declared, "recommended purity of heart and life." He impressed all classes of people and all types of life with the truth of his message. He made every one feel his goodness and the virtue of truth in him. He was a shining example of the way in which a man can let the Life of God reveal itself through him. A Friend who knew him well wrote thus of him:

> I am inclined to believe that his natural turn of mind was open and unsuspecting, with a disposition to innocent cheerfulness; but of all men I ever knew, the greatest change of countenance was exhibited from his different situations of mind. When his spirit was deeply exercised, there was in his aspect an almost awful solemnity; but when he relaxed among his friends, the most unreserved and sincere cheerfulness I ever saw.[1]

It was through such lives as his that Quakerism was able to preserve itself as a living force in a time of dryness and discouragement.

These leading Friends whom I have selected for brief consideration fairly well represent the solid spiritual nucleus of the Society in the first half of the eighteenth century. The Friends were "the quiet ones" in the world of their time. They had few learned men. They hardly knew what the great world around them was thinking. They had none of the usual marks of greatness or distinction. The descriptive content of their lives is not rich or varied. They were not heroic fighters with spiritual weapons like the Quakers of the first generation, nor, with the exception of Woolman, impressive workers for great social and humanitarian reforms, like their successors in the nineteenth century. They will interest our age, if at all, because they were sure of God and lived in a world of rather sordid aims and increasing scepticism, with their sensitive souls open inward toward eternal realities. They saw no way to remake the world or to establish the Kingdom of God in the earth on any great

[1] Thomas Wilkinson, *Some Account of John Pemberton's Journey in the Highlands, etc.* (1810), p. 83.

scale, but they went quietly on bearing their testimony to the fact that they had a direct way of approach to the living God, and were constantly refreshed and fortified by inward resources which the world could neither give nor take away.

## CHAPTER II

### QUIETISM

THE historical student cannot fail to discover that he has passed over into a different atmosphere, a changed intellectual climate and an altered outlook when he passes from the writings of the "First Publishers of Truth" (1648–1725) to the Journals of the leading Quakers of the succeeding period (1725–1825). History furnishes many momentous instances of the difficulty—in fact, of the impossibility—of carrying on unchanged the gulf-stream current of a great creative religious movement. I have already referred to the fact that Christianity in the second century is already a marked variation from that wonderful outburst of Life which the prophets through all the succeeding centuries have fondly called "primitive" Christianity. The second and third generations of Franciscans were very different from the Poor Little Brother of Assisi. And the Lutherans at the end of the sixteenth century bore but slight resemblance to the dynamic reformer of 1521.

Spiritual movements, like life itself, are subject to the shaping forces of an ever-shifting environment. They cannot go on unmodified. "To go on" at all means to change and to adjust. The very tendency of habit which appears in all human undertakings would seem *a priori* to give continuity and fixity and permanence to a spiritual movement, but in reality the very formation of habit profoundly alters a movement and changes its character and quality as well as its intensity. Then, too, the maturing and unfolding logic of a newly discovered principle in-

evitably works itself out with the flow of time, and the old words come to mean something different on the lips of a new generation.

All these modifying influences were operative in the shaping of the later periods of Quakerism—in the transition from the primitive Quaker movement to "Quakerism." Habit and custom are everywhere in evidence in the later stage, and we miss the element of freshness and surprise, of creative insight and discovery, of fluidity and mobility, that marked the birth-time of the movement. We can without difficulty see the vast difference between the illuminating experience of a divine Light as it burst into the consciousness of the persistent seeker, George Fox, in 1648, and the theory of the inward Light as it is expounded in the books of 1748. But without much doubt the most significant change in inner aspect and attitude that marked the passage from the epoch of the original leaders of the movement to the epoch of the generation succeeding them was due to the subtle influence of what, in a loose way, we call environment. The leaders in both periods were, in the broad sense of the word, mystics. They both strongly stressed the immediate connection of the human soul with God, and they both centred the basis of their religious faith on the fact of direct divine-human relationship and intercourse. But the mysticism of the second period is quite a different type from that of the first period. One is characteristically positive, the other is negative to a marked degree. One springs out of a rich and exalted conception of the immeasurable depth and worth of man, the other is built on a pervading sense of the wreck and ruin of fallen man. One is apostolic and catholic, strong in the faith that its discovery is to be proclaimed from the housetop and that all the world is to share its message, the other is timid and exclusive and is content with the cultivation of a remnant and with the making of a peculiar people. Some aspects of this shift of position were no doubt due to the logic of the expounders of the Quaker principle, especially to that of Robert Barclay. A fearless and searching exposition of

the inward Light in the thought-terms of the seventeenth century was certain to carry the expounder into the barren regions of negation. He was foredoomed to the conclusion that the divine Light, or Seed of God, is from "another world," is absolutely in contrast with what is mutable and in process, and consequently is describable only in negations, or only in words that are abstract and devoid of definite content for human thought or for human imagination. But there are other aspects which cannot be traced to the logic of Barclay, or the other first expounders. New spiritual elements appear, new terms come into common use, new ideals and aspirations, like a strange leaven, begin to work in the entire body. The source of this influence is to be found in the great spiritual movement historically known as Quietism.

It has been too much the custom to treat Quietism as a sporadic type of religion, as a sort of capricious "sport," to use a familiar botanical term, expressing itself in two or three famous, but solitary and isolated, mystics on the continent of Europe, and to assume that later evidences of Quietism must be traced back to the teachings of these few rare expounders of it. I am convinced, on the contrary, that these select individuals were only luminous examples of a profound religious tendency which, in varying form of expression, swept over the entire western world in the latter part of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries, flooded into the consciousness of all who were intensely religious, and left an "unimaginable touch" even on the rank and file of believers. It was a deep and widespread movement, confined to no one country, and it was limited to no one branch of the Christian Church. It burst forth in sundered places and spread like a new Pentecost through kindled personalities and through quick and powerful books of genius.

Quietism at its height was the most acute and intense stage of European mysticism. It was not a wholly new type of inward religion. It was rather a result of the normal ripening, the irresistible maturing, of experiences,

ideas, and principles that had been profoundly working for a very long period in the religious consciousness of Europe—a fact which partly explains its seemingly spontaneous appearance in a number of widely separated localities. It was an intense and glowing faith in the direct invasion of God into the sphere of human personality — a faith rising in many cases to the level of indubitable experience—but a faith, at the same time, indissolubly bound up with a fundamental conception of man's total depravity and spiritual bankruptcy. It must be understood at the outset that Quietism does not spell lethargy and inaction ; it does not mean folded hands and a little more sleep ; it is not a religion for lotus-eaters. The quietist may, and often did, swing out into a course of action that would make the rationally centred Christian quail with fear and slink to cover. It is not a question of action or of non-action ; it is a question of *the right way to initiate action.* The quietist holds a peculiar view in reference to the kind of spring, incentive, or moving that can inaugurate a spiritual act. For him all acts that are motived by human consciousness, all aims designed, arranged, and planned by reason and the will of man, bear the mark and brand of the "creature" and are below the sphere of the spiritual. All thoughts and strivings that originate in mere man are spiritually barren and unfruitful. There are two levels or storeys to the universe. One level is the realm of "nature," which has passed through a moral catastrophe that broke its inherent connection with the divine and so left it godless and ruined. The other level is the "supernatural" realm where God is throned in power and splendour as spiritual Ruler. Nothing spiritual can originate on the level of "nature"; it can come only from "yonder." The main problems of religion, on this theory, are problems concerning the way in which the chasm is spanned between these two divided, sundered realms.

Quietism has its own peculiar answer to this urgent question. It had its birth and its nurture in the absolute despair of human nature which Protestant theology and

the Counter-Reformation had greatly intensified. It flourished on an extreme form of the doctrine of the ruin and fall of man—an utter miserabilism of the "creature." The trail of the old Adam lies over all that man does or thinks. The taint of the "creature" spoils all that springs from this source and fountain. Nothing divine, nothing that has religious value, can originate in man as man. The true and essential preparation therefore for spiritual ministry, or for any action in the truth and life, seemed to the quietist to be the repose of all one's own powers, the absence of all efforts of self-direction, of all strain and striving, the annihilation of all confidence in one's own capacities, the complete quiet of the "creature." Then out of this silence of all flesh, out of this calm of contemplation, in which the mind thinks and desires and wills nothing—this pure repose—divine movings will spontaneously come, the extraordinary grace of openings will be made, an inner burst of revelation will be granted, the sure direction of divine pointings will be given, a spiritual fecundity will be graciously vouchsafed. Passivity and emptiness are thus only conditions of divine moving; they are only stages on the way to action. And the quietist may become, without any violation of his principle, a person capable of extraordinary activity.

What I have been calling the state of "passivity" and "emptiness" needs further comment and elucidation. "Passivity," of the effective sort, might better be called concentration or absorption. It is a state of inner life in which all the powers and functions of consciousness are brought into complete focal unity, so that all dualisms of self and other vanish, all tendencies to scatter disappear, all vagrant suggestions and inhibitions are absent. The soul is unified, intensified, fused, penetrated, and *stands absolutely on attention.* The quietist believed that this state was reached by a single act, a mighty act, and when once this state was reached, the soul became a living centre of receptivity. We speak here of quietude, repose, passivity; but it would appear that at no other time and under no other conditions is there such intense spiritual

*action.* There is such complete concentration, such unmixed absorption, such undivided inner unity, that the mind takes no note of its own processes and does not reflect upon its intent or content. Von Hügel very aptly says that the absence of the direct consciousness of the self and of what is happening within is a characteristic of the deepest and most creative moments, and this is true whether the action is confined to the inward or outward sphere.

"The degree of mind or will-force," he says, "operating in Nelson at Trafalgar and in Napoleon at Waterloo, or again in St. Ignatius of Antioch in the Amphitheatre, and in Savonarola at the stake, was evidently in the precisely contrary ratio to their direct consciousness of it or of themselves at all." [1]

The primary aspirations and the profoundest travail of soul of those who set forth on this spiritual pilgrimage are for the crucifixion of self and the death of the "creature," and the goal of the pilgrimage is the attainment of a state of *pure* repose and contemplation in which God flows in and takes the place of the crucified me, becomes the only inward reality, and inaugurates whatever action is acceptable to His perfect and holy will. The highest spiritual state, on whatever path the soul is travelling, is to the quietist always "pure," *i.e.* it is a state uncontaminated by any definite mental content. "Pure love," which is love in its consummation, is a love that loves nothing finite or particular. All selfishness is purged away and it seeks no return. It loves for the sake of love alone. "Pure faith," which is faith at the *n*th degree, is a concentrated, unalloyed, and intense assent or swing of soul to God without the content and filling of any definite ideas or beliefs or expectations. "Pure prayer," which is prayer at its really efficacious level, is an absorbed and unitive state, in which not only all selfish thoughts and desires are obliterated but all thoughts and desires of every description are banished. The soul and God have met, and all of self is hushed as His presence flows in and bathes the soul with the fountains of life.

[1] *The Mystical Element of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 133.

This extreme form of religious mysticism, which culminated in the teachings of Molinos, Madame Guyon, and Fénelon, was already current, even in England, before Madame Guyon was born, and it was a waxing influence for more than half a century. It is clearly described in Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ*, which was first published in 1649.

"Beyond this [type of meditation] I have described," he writes, "there is a degree of meditation so exalted that it changes the very name, and is called contemplation. It is in the unitive way of religion, that is, it consists in unions and adherences to God; it is a prayer of quietness and silence, a meditation extraordinary, *a discourse without variety*, a vision and intuition of divine excellences, an immediate entry into an orb of light, and a resolution of all our faculties into sweetness, affections, and starings upon the divine beauty."[1]

His further description of the way to this state of pure contemplation is a very happy attempt to express that which passes expression—that which, as he says, is "not to be discoursed of but felt."

"When persons have been long softened with the continual droppings of religion, and their spirits made timorous [*i.e.* sensitive] and apt for impression by the assiduity of prayer and perpetual alarms of death and the continual dyings of mortification; the fancy [*i.e.* creative imagination], which is a very great instrument of devotion, is kept continually warm, and in a disposition and aptitude to take fire *and to flame out into great ascents*."[2]

Another famous Englishman of the seventeenth century, who taught and practised interior or wordless prayer, was John Hales—often called "the ever-memorable" (b. 1584). In his *Golden Remains*[3] he says of prayer:

"Nay, one thing I know more, that the prayer which is the most forcible transcends and far exceeds all power of words. For St. Paul, speaking unto us of the most effectual kind of prayer, calls it sighs and groans that cannot be expressed. Nothing cries so loud in the ears of God as the sighing of a contrite and earnest heart. . . . It requires not the voice but the mind; not the stretching of the hands but the intention of the heart; not

[1] Taylor's *Life of Christ* (Edition of 1850, London), vol. ii. p. 139.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 140.
[3] (Ed. 1659) p. 153.

any outward shape or carriage of the body but the inward behaviour of the understanding. How then can it slacken your worldly business and occasions to mix them with sighs and groans, which are the most effectual prayer?"

This is not yet fully developed Quietism, and the characteristic terminology and the sacred phrases of the later exponents are not yet coined. But the quietistic tendency is here obvious, and the set of the current is strongly indicated. The great continental movement itself—the apotheosis of Quietism—was only the fearless and unrestrained expansion and fulfilment of what was implicit in the mysticism of the preceding century, especially in the mysticism of the Counter-Reformation in Roman Catholic countries. As a matter of fact, Quietism was implicit not only in the mysticism of the Counter-Reformation but in all Christian mysticism which shows a strong Neoplatonic strain. It is quite easy to find it in St. Augustine; indeed, his doctrine of grace and his view of man furnish the very ground and basis for fully developed Quietism. Thomas à Kempis, in his *Imitation of Christ*, is a master-expert both in the language of Quietism and in the thing itself. The influence of this book in England was beyond question one of the direct sources of English Quietism in the seventeenth century. The other St. Thomas—Thomas Aquinas—who laid, deep and solid, the foundations for so many phases of spiritual thought, has much to say both of the unitive, concentrated consciousness of inner quiet and also of that perfect love which "clings to God for His own sake," with "no thought of any good thing that may accrue from it."

The great names in the directly influential mystical movement of the Counter-Reformation are St. Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556), who is known in history as the founder of the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, rather than as the great mystic which he was; St. Teresa (1515–1582), the greatest of the group; St. John of the Cross (1542–1591); St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622); St. Jeanne Françoise de Chantal (1572–1642); and St. Vincent de Paul (1576–1660).

"Stout Cortes," fighting his way over barren stretches of ocean, through strange jungles inhabited by fierce beasts and fiercer men, to a new and seemingly limitless ocean on which he gazed, "silent, upon a peak in Darien," was not stouter of heart or bolder of spirit than were these contemporaries of his who explored the uncharted and unfathomable seas within themselves and tracked their way through still stranger jungles in the human heart to the shoreless Sea whose tides seemed to surge into their channels.

This movement constitutes, without question, one of the most important chapters in religious history. Here one may see the human spirit on its most steep and difficult pilgrimage, its most dizzy and daring ascents, braving darkness and loneliness and silence and crucifixion on its secret way to God. Like Abraham, these children of faith went out, not knowing whither they went, risking absolutely everything in time and eternity on their quest, which was total absorption in God, the annihilation of self, the substitution of divine action for action directed by human will, and the attainment of a perfect and selfless love.

No other experts in the mystical way of any epoch have given us more keen and exhaustive analyses of the steps, the stages, the processes of the deadly war with self, of the total eclipse of all that is "me" or "mine," of the dark night of the soul, than these great spiritual geniuses of the sixteenth century have given in their books; nor have heroic souls ever been less daunted by suffering and crucifixion than were these tremendous lovers of the suffering Christ.

They were more sane and robust and well-balanced than their successors, the quietists in the seventeenth century; but the latter movement was undoubtedly the offspring of the earlier one, and though marked by a changed emphasis and a new emotional tone, Quietism drew its terminology, its stock of ideas, its methods, its practices, and the model of its characteristic experiences from the great mystics of the Counter-Reformation,

especially from Teresa, John of the Cross, and Francis de Sales. Before the word "Quietism" came into use and before ecclesiastics on the watch-tower perceived the rising storm, these earlier mystical writers had been "building all inward," and had been exalting the "empty," "motionless" inner state, the will that "wills nothing," the "one single act," which brings "irresistible grace" into operation within the soul.

Sporadic groups of persons, claiming divine illumination and making use of silence and passive orison to promote the union of the soul with God, appeared through the first half of the seventeenth century both in Spain and Italy and, as we have seen, in England. The Spanish mystic, Juan Falconi (1596–1638), a member of the Order of "Our Lady of Mercy," a passionately devout soul, saturated with the teachings of the mystics, was one of the early exponents of Quietism who deeply influenced the movement in Spain, Italy, and France. An important letter on silent interior prayer was written by him in 1628. It was printed in Spain in 1657, and was shortly after translated into Italian and very widely circulated in Italy, and a little later was put into French and read throughout France.[1] Falconi thinks but little of "*sensible* divine operations," *i.e.* operations which give a definite content to the mind. He urges his reader to rise above these lower stages and settle herself into the presence of God by an interior act of faith which abandons everything of self, for time and for eternity. "Dwell in silence. Think of nothing, however good, however sublime it may be. Dwell only in pure faith in God and in utter resignation to His holy will."[2] In the prayer of interior silence in which the soul is absolutely abandoned to the will of God and in which it knows not what it does, it finds itself advancing and being established in faith without knowing how. The great virtues form in the soul and grow there by interior operations that are

[1] It was printed at the end of Madame Guyon's *Moyen court* of 1690, and is in the first volume of her *Opuscules spirituels* (1704).

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 101.

beyond knowledge. The soul is prospering best when it has no definite and limiting ideas of God present in consciousness, and it should not disturb itself with thinking whether it shall put its virtues into practice or not. This concern belongs in a lower stage of the spiritual life. All effort, all interior exercise, all sensible operations, all dependence on mental faculties, only disturb the real divine operation.[1] "Sink yourself into naked, obscure [*i.e.* "pure"] faith in God and let yourself be annihilated in this divine abyss."[2]

By the middle of the century a sect known as the Society of the Pelagini, from its founder Giacomo Filippo di Santa Pelagia, a layman of Milan, became widespread in northern Italy. The members of these little societies met together for silent mental prayer, which they considered essential to salvation. They believed that they had found the only true way to God, and that, having found the efficacy of the inner way, they could safely dispense with the services of the ordained priests and with the requirements of the Church. Bishop Burnet of England, who was himself a man possessed of deep inward religious life and who followed with the keenest interest the stages of the quietistic drama on the Continent, wrote from Italy that the quietists were observed to be more strict in their lives and more retired and serious in their mental devotions than other Christians. He gives the impression that their method of worship has weakened the hold of the priests over the people.[3] The Inquisition set its forces in motion to annihilate the "heresy," but it continued to spread in secret and subterranean ways through the cities of northern Italy for almost a quarter of a century, and a very large number of persons became accustomed to and fascinated with the practice of silence.

This practice of silence and the full significance of quietistic tendencies came impressively to public attention

[1] *Moyen court*, pp. 105, 106. [2] *Ibid.* p. 108.

[3] Burnet's *Letters of Travel* (ed. 1750), pp. 190-193. The first ed. was that of 1687.

in the 'seventies through the teachings and writings of a remarkable spiritual expert named Miguel de Molinos. He was born in Spain about 1627, received the degree of doctor of theology at Coimbra, and came to Rome some time about 1665. He was deeply versed in mystical literature, profoundly influenced by the writings of Teresa, John of the Cross, and Francis de Sales, and already in this early stage dedicated to his peculiar mission of inculcating the way of silence. He very soon became the most noted and widely sought religious guide in Italy, and he found himself the centre of a great spiritual revival, which was due not merely to his personal qualities but rather to the fact that he gave powerful expression to a tendency already well under way around him. Pope Innocent XI.—the Pope of Browning's *The Ring and the Book*—was intimately attached to him and gave him apartments in the papal palace. Persons of the highest rank and "honourable women not a few" sought for his spiritual direction.[1] Bishop Burnet, in his *Letters from Italy*, says, "It is believed he hath above 20,000 followers in Naples alone."[2] His popularity was extraordinary even before he published his famous *Guida Spirituale* (Spiritual Guide), which appeared in Rome in 1675, and which went through twenty editions in many languages during the next six years. This book came from the press with the approbation of five distinguished theologians of the time, representing the Orders of the Franciscans, Trinitarians, Jesuits, Carmelites, and Capuchins, four of them being also censors of the Inquisition.

We must turn now to the little book itself to see what Italian Quietism, as expressed by its most famous exponent, really was. Molinos declares in his preface that God is always communicating new light by continuous revelation to mankind. His infinite wisdom is never exhausted, human souls continually need fresh instruction, and so there will be new spiritual books to the end of the

[1] It is said that twenty thousand letters of consultation were found in his apartments on the day of his arrest. [2] Burnet, *op. cit.* p. 190.

world. And in this endless list of new spiritual books his book is one which he believes God has inspired and called for.

In the introduction, Molinos describes the two principal states or stages of spiritual life, the first of which many attain; the second only few, because the way is very strait. The first stage is *meditation*; the second, *contemplation*. In meditation reason is operative, the attention is fixed upon the central truths of Christianity, the mind is busy with the mysteries of faith, the will grapples with doubts, and all the faculties of the inner self are employed in the effort to make faith and truth triumph over doubt and error. Contemplation is on a wholly different level. It does not begin until sense and intellect are left behind; until the soul has retired into its centre; until there is complete absence of thought, ideas, truths, images, all focussing of consciousness on distinct and particular objects; until effort and struggle of will have absolutely ceased and the soul enters perfect repose and peace, desiring nothing, seeking nothing, fearing nothing, resting calm and secure in pure faith, unselfish love, and wordless prayer. The soul is now full of joy, but knows not why; burns with love, but comprehends not how it loves.[1] There is but one castle to which the soul can flee for escape from the storm and din and warfare and defeats of the world and where it can triumph over all enemies that beset it, and that is the inner castle, the interior fortress of peace, which no assaults can disturb.[2]

He calls for a retreat from the world, a resignation, an indifference, an *ataraxy*, that in stoic temper far outdoes the boldest of the ancient Stoics. The soul must learn to do without any form of sensuous enjoyment whatever, without any tokens of divine favour or of divine love, without any raptures or ecstasies or visions, without the

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*; Introduction, Observation II.

[2] *Ibid.* pt. i. chap. i. There is a very interesting passage in John Woolman's *Journal*, in which precisely the same view of prayer is expressed: "The place of prayer is a precious habitation. . . . I saw this habitation to be safe—to be inwardly quiet, when there were great stirrings and commotions in the world." *Journal* (Whittier's Edition), p. 236.

slightest sign that its passion and sufferings are appreciated:

Thou wilt experience not only that the creatures will forsake thee and those from whom thou hadst hoped most, but even the brooks of thy faculties will dry up so that thou canst not think—not even so much as to conceive a good thought of God. Heaven will seem to thee to be of brass and thou shalt receive no light from above.[1] . . . The soul must learn to walk in dark and desert paths, dead to passions, dead to desires, dead to reflections, accustomed to dryness and aridity of spirit, enduring crucifixion and annihilation of self-love and self-will without wincing or even asking why, "until no news makes it afraid and no success makes it glad." The soul must attain an annihilation of its own judgment, its own will, its own works, its inclinations, desires, thoughts, so that it finds itself dead to its own will, desire, endeavour, understanding, and thought; willing as if it did not will; desiring as if it did not desire; understanding as if it did not understand; thinking as if it did not think; without inclining to anything; embracing equally contempts and honours, benefits and corrections.[2]

There are two kinds of prayer: the one tender, delightful, joy-bringing, and full of sensuous comfort; the other obscure, dry, desolate, without response or joy. The first is for children, the second is for strong men. There are also two degrees of silence: the one a silence of words and requests; the other an absolute silence of thoughts and of all self-activity. It is only in this second stage of prayer and of silence that the Holy Spirit operates unhindered. It is only when there is total nakedness of self, complete death of self-activity, that the divine Presence is infused and works without disturbance or disquiet. Molinos insists, in the very words which Madame de Chantal had already used, that *God will have all things done by the operation of His own activity, and that therefore the quieter I keep the better all things succeed.*[3] As love mounts, self falls, so that perfect love is utter annihilation of self, which is the only true miracle of sainthood.[4]

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*, pt. i. chap. viii.
[2] *Ibid.* pt. ii. chap. xix.
[3] *Ibid.* pt. i. chap. xiii.
[4] *Ibid.* pt. ii. chap. vii.

Strange as it may seem to a generation accustomed to hedonistic theories of life, this passionate stoic message, this call to retreat to a depth of silence below the silence of words, this gospel of unrestrained self-crucifixion, came to men's ears with a mysterious fascination and spoke to their condition like a new revelation. But its very success was its defeat. So long as it remained an abstract theory it did not much matter, but when it was translated into life and *marched* in practice, its dangerous import, from the point of view of the Church, was obvious. Its disciples—and they were very numerous—discontinued the use of the rosary and even vocal prayer, gave up confession, discounted the value of all external performances and exterior acts, and plainly showed a tendency to get on without the aid of priests or of the vast and expensive machinery of the Church. If God could be met in the silence of the interior retreat, what function is left for a priest, and if salvation was a matter of self-annihilation, how can the Church promote it? Was not this proclamation of the inner way to God, then, a preparation for a Protestantism in the South, as Luther's proclamation of salvation by faith had been for the North? Some of these quietists, even the most spiritual and devoted ones, believed and taught that one single act of concentrated interior faith, one undivided assent of soul to the will of God, with no reservations and with no desires for self, one supreme act of pure devotion and prayer, would bring grace into operation in the soul so superlatively and effectively that it would continue through all the rest of time and eternity, like that water which the Samaritan woman sought that she might not need henceforth to draw more. The guardians of orthodoxy saw the danger and determined to stamp out the movement, though the sympathetic heart of the Pope was with the new piety and with the man who had revived an intenser faith.

The story of the crusade for the extirpation of Italian Quietism and the details of the process of hushing Molinos in the absolute silence of the Inquisition's solitary cell

cannot be told here. The work was done by that force which "strikes once and strikes no more," and the danger of a new reformation by mysticism in Italian and Spanish countries was passed! Among the charges levelled against Molinos, including sixty-eight errors in doctrine, there were still graver charges of immoral practice. He was said by his inquisitors to have confessed to the view that it was possible for a soul in union with God to perform bodily acts of an apparently immoral nature, but yet without the consent of the spirit and so without any moral taint. He was further said to have confessed that he himself had committed improper acts, not suitable for repetition, but that as they were acts of his body, to which his higher faculties in union with God did not consent, they were not sinful acts.

These confessions rest solely on the assertion of inquisitors who were bent on making a case and who had at their command methods of torture which often wrung answers from the lips of their victims, though the words were denied as soon as the quivering flesh was released. The actual truth in this matter can never be settled, though I distrust the moral charges against Molinos. But there can be no doubt that this extreme tendency of his to centre religion in an experience above distinctions was then and always must be a dangerous tendency. The moment "distinctions" are transcended on a level beyond good and evil, whether by Molinos or by Nietzsche, the very basis of morality has vanished, because the very life of morality rests upon a clear vision of distinction between higher and lower ethical issues, and upon a positive focussing of moral purpose and a definite choice of ends. No way of retreat to an inner citadel of peace, where the problems of the complicated world are transcended and where all acts become "indifferent," can be a way of genuine spiritual victory, and when the inner peace is won by the method of retreat, the lower instincts and passions, left without the guidance and direction of a sanctified intelligence, are only too likely to come into operation.

This stoical Quietism of Molinos, which looks so hard and stern toward the self, which seems in fact one long Golgotha of self-crucifixion, turns out, as I have said, to be a way beset with moral dangers and a way, after all, that misses the slow formation of a robust and virile sainthood. His panegyric on "Nothingness" is impressive in its note of simplicity and humility of spirit, but taken literally it cuts the central nerve of the spiritual life. "Look at Nothing, will Nothing, endeavour after Nothing; and then in everything thy soul will live reposed with quiet." "Plunge into Nothing, and there thou shalt find a holy Sanctuary against any tempest whatsoever."[1]

The two great French interpreters of Quietism—its prophetess and its scholarly expert—were Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Motte Guyon (1648–1717), and François de Salignac de la Motte Fénelon[2] (1651–1715), preceptor of the young Duke of Burgundy—grandson of Louis XIV.—and, after 1695, Archbishop of Cambrai. The dramatic story of their lives cannot be given here, as it would occupy more space than would be fitting, though there can be no question that their writings, and particularly the Autobiography of Madame Guyon, had a marked influence upon Friends both in England and America.[3]

After her Autobiography, Madame Guyon's two most important books were, *Les Torrents spirituels* (Spiritual Torrents) and *Le Moyen court et très facile de faire oraison* (The Short and Easy Method of Prayer).[4] These two little books exhibit rare psychological insight and spiritual grasp. They show unusual literary style and power, and they are the classics of seventeenth-century Quietism, though they reveal at the same time the

[1] *The Spiritual Guide*, pt. ii. chap. xx.

[2] De la Motte is often spelled De la Mothe, but the form given in the text is more correct.

[3] I have printed in the *Harvard Theological Review* for January 1917 an extensive study of Quietism.

[4] These two treatises are published in her *Opuscules spirituels* (Cologne, 1704), 2 vols. Her complete works fill forty volumes. *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, 1789–1791).

weaknesses and the extravagance of the movement. It is a primary idea of Madame Guyon that there is a "central depth" in the soul, which has come from God and which exhibits "a perpetual proclivity" to return to Him, like the push of the stream back to its source in the sea. All souls would return to their native Source, if they did not encounter the obstacle of sin, and therefore the main problem of life is the healing of the wounds of sin. There is, in her opinion, no solution short of the complete annihilation of the individual self in which sin inheres, the absolute spoiling of every particular thing to which the soul clings in its sundered selfhood. The soul must die to everything which it loves for self-sake, even to its desire for states of grace, gifts of the Spirit, supernatural communications, and salvation itself. The soul must get beyond the state of enduring crosses and sufferings because it wants God to see its devotion and its love, and it must learn to love and suffer and be crucified without knowing or asking whether He sees its devotion or whether He cares.[1] The soul must *let itself go* without thinking or willing or desiring. It must even get beyond doing virtuous actions, and reach a height where the *distinction* of actions is annulled.[2] But the soul loses its own powers and capacities only to receive an immense capacity, like that of the river when it reaches the sea. It no longer possesses, it is possessed. It has lost "the nothing" for "the All." It is perfect with the perfection of God, rich with His riches, and it loves with His love. It is one and the same thing with its Source. The divine life becomes entirely natural to it. It moves with the divine moving, acts as He acts through it, and its interior prayer is action.[3]

*Le Moyen court* is a powerful presentation of interior prayer as the heart of religion and of the life of union with God. Here again Madame Guyon has much to say of "the soul's inmost centre," of the profound interior depth of man, of "the native energies" of the soul. She

[1] *Torrents*, chap. v. sect. xix. [2] *Ibid.* chap. ix. sect. vii.-viii.
[3] *Ibid.* chap. iv. sect. ii.; chap. ix. sect. i.-viii.

shows an uncompromising stoical sternness toward everything that is individual, everything that is of the "creature." There must be a withdrawal from any dependence on the round of external forms and practices, from outward attractions and occupations, from all self-satisfaction and self-exertion, from the strain and effort of thought, from the worry and fret of activity, from everything that differentiates into the particular or focusses on the concrete. Peace is attained only when the mind comes back to its primal *simplicity* and leaves behind or on one side all that is distinct and sensible. It is when the mariners rest from the toil of their rowing and let the wind drive their vessel that they reach their desired haven.[1] Pure faith, burning love that seeks no return, an interior silence, in which the soul retreats from everything that can be named or thought and sinks into its central depth, is the way to possess God, who is always present and always at home in this central depth as soon as one reaches it. This silence infused with the presence of God, this prayer which is the energy and fire of love, this hushed enjoyment of God with no straining for gifts or returns, produces a marvellous expansion of life and gives a plenitude of power for spiritual service, for it is now the Spirit Himself, the eternal Word of God, that prays and moves and acts within. The soul that has attained this inward peace is not inactive or idle, rather all its powers and its multifarious interests, drawn into a centred unity, are directed by a divine moving principle which can accomplish more in a moment than can be accomplished by a whole life spent in the reiterated acts of self-exertion.

Fénelon's most important contribution to the literature of Quietism is to be found in his famous *Maxims of the Saints of the Inner Life*,[2] which produced a storm of the first magnitude in the ecclesiastical world. We cannot

[1] *Moyen court*, chap. xxii.

[2] *Explication des maximes des saints sur la vie intérieure* (1697). For a most important light on the relation between Fénelon and Madame Guyon the reader is referred to Masson's *Fénelon et Madame Guyon : documents nouveaux et inédits* (Paris, 1907).

follow the intense controversy which ensued between Fénelon and Bossuet. The latter sweepingly condemned "pure faith," "disinterested love," and "silent prayer operated in the soul by God." He conceived Quietism to be a dangerous substitute for real Christianity, and, in lofty and eloquent style, he carried on the fierce battle against "the new mysticism."

The modern reader finds it difficult to comprehend the immense stir which Fénelon's little book created in those far-off days of war and diplomacy and fashion, but for a time nobody talked of anything else. The king ordered Fénelon to leave Versailles, and all the influence of this "most Christian king" was brought into play to secure in the Vatican the condemnation of the *Maxims*.

It must, however, be admitted that the *Maxims* was an unwise book for the occasion and an extreme expression of quietistic mysticism for any age, though it is possible for the present-day reader to realize that Fénelon was aiming at a lofty and genuine type of inward religion. The deep and ineradicable difficulty with this entire formulation of the spiritual life is its inability to get out of the dark region of negation into the real world of concrete experience and moral action. "Pure contemplation," he says, "is negative. It is not occupied with any sensible image nor with any distinct idea of God."[1] Sanctification is the attainment of the state of holy indifference, of absolute non-desire.[2] The highest state of prayer is absolute passivity, complete repose, in which thinking, feeling, willing, are obliterated. The apex of human life is reached in a state of perfect *simplicity*, when the mind is focussed upon no object, when the will aims at no goal, and when the soul does not like one thing better than another thing.

Beneath all this numbing negation and glorifying of the abstract, there throbs, however, everywhere through the book the real passion of this exalted soul for union of heart with God, for a re-living of the Christ-life, and for positive co-operation with the Spirit, inwardly ex-

[1] *Maximes*, chap. xxvii. [2] *Ibid.* chaps. v. and vi.

perienced. He was earnestly endeavouring to wash selfishness and self-seeking out of religion, to show how to avoid the eager strain and over-busy activity that characterize Christian people, and to emphasize the truth that God would become the supreme factor of our lives if we could only learn how to keep ourselves in the currents of His life instead of across them.

The extraordinary insight of Fénelon, however, and the rare sanity of his spiritual counsel appear at their best in his *Spiritual Letters*. His power of psychological analysis of states and conditions, and his frank way of telling the distinguished women who consulted him the laws of physical and spiritual health, are remarkable for that age and would be for any age. "No peace is to be looked for," he tells one of his correspondents, "so long as we are at the mercy of greedy, insatiable longings, trying to satisfy that 'me' of ours which is touchy over everything that concerns it"—so long as we nurse "a sickly self-love which cannot be touched without screaming."[1] There must be, he insists, a relentless and deadly war with this cruel enemy of our peace, our own *self*. There must be no softness, no truce, until this enemy is annihilated. "The more absolute the self-renunciation, the deeper the peace."[2]

He is very keen to detect the signs of morbid temperament and the illusions which haunt a soul that is a prey to over-fine scruples. "You are too skilful in tormenting yourself about nothing," he tells one of his consultants. "You dry up the sources of prayer, under the pretext of hunting out infinitesimal faults. You distract and perplex yourself with your self-investigations. You indulge in anxious search after trifling faults which you magnify in your imagination."[3] To such souls he prescribes relaxation of strain and striving, the healing rest of silent prayer, the realization of the continual presence of God, and absolute confidence in the love of God: "Trust to love; it takes all, but it gives all."[4]

[1] Letter XXVIII.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.* XXXVII.
[4] *Ibid.* XXXV.

He finds his letter-writers too restless and active in their religious life, too eager for the attainment of inner states, and too anxious for a religious reputation. The wise advice is, "Try to soothe yourself in silence before God, as the mother soothes the child that is sobbing on her knees."[1] Get absorbed in the love of God, follow your heart in its deepest leadings, and you will be less eager to please men and so will really please them more.[2]

He is always telling his correspondents, who want to get out of the world in order to lead the saintly life, that this expectation is a delusion. Saintliness is not to be sought in some world apart from pain and care and annoyances; it is to be found, if anywhere, in the midst of daily duties, in this world where we must eat and drink and clothe ourselves, where we must get on with imperfect neighbours and be subject to disappointments and defeats. God is everywhere within reach. One can practise His presence even while eating or dressing, and Love is more eager to bestow itself than we are to receive it. "God is often hidden behind disturbing conditions." "He is beside us amid daily annoyances."[3] He counsels another correspondent to stop useless reflections on the past, whether of regret or of complacency, to avoid unprofitable brooding, and to form, by act of will, the habit of practising the presence of God in the midst of necessary occupations.[4]

What he advised his friends he practised in his own life, first, during the strain and agony of separation from his old circle of friends, of bitter attack and of condemnation by the official Church; later, during the heavy burdens of administering the complicated affairs of a difficult diocese; and finally, in the supreme sorrow of his life, over the death of his beloved pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, grandson of the king, who seemed to Fénelon the one hope of the France of the future.

Fénelon exhibited a strange mingling of the man of the world and the saint, the rational thinker and the

[1] Letter XV.
[2] *Ibid.* XXXI.
[3] *Ibid.* VI.
[4] *Ibid.* CXXXIII.

quietist absorbed in God, the ambitious churchman and the lover of the crucifying cross of Christ, the persecutor of heretics and the gentle apostle of soul-freedom, the ingenious casuist and the sincere spirit who would not at any cost desert the woman who had convinced him that she was a holy person. He is one of the noblest illustrations in the seventeenth century of the impossibility of successfully solving the problem of spiritual life on the assumption that human nature—the natural man—is absolutely corrupt and depraved, and that God can triumph in the soul only when the human powers have been annihilated, the assumption that God is all only when man is nothing. Fénelon himself has put this condition in striking fashion :

> As the sacristan at the end of the service snuffs out the altar candles one after another, so must grace put out our natural life, and as his extinguisher, ill-applied, leaves behind it a guttering spark that melts the wax, so will it be with us if one single spark of natural life remains.[1]

That condition underlies all the vagaries and mistakes of Quietism, and it presents, wherever it appears, an *impasse* in the way of the spiritual life. If ever two souls have passionately tried to go that hard road, have ever attained the enduring, stoical-christian temper, have ever been ready to crucify "the me," and have ever been eager to have God all and themselves nothing, it was these two French quietists of the seventeenth century—Madame Guyon and François Fénelon ; but nothing is more clear than that they succeeded in so far as they retained and ennobled their concrete personalities and their interesting individual characteristics, and that they failed in so far as they suppressed and annihilated themselves and arrived at abstract love, non-desire, and no-willing.

The entire movement—certainly one of the most extraordinary Odysseys of the inner world ever undertaken by man—was a bold venture of the soul to find a direct way from the failure and ruin of the finite self

[1] Letter CCIII.

to complete recovery through union with the Infinite. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it was an attempt to do away with priests and mediators, to find salvation in its purest and loftiest degree without a single external help, to prove that the only realities in the universe that count are God and the soul, and that they are so near that they can become one. Most of the great quietists reviewed here were Roman Catholics, but, perhaps without knowing it, they were at heart as much protestant as Luther. They were striving, often through most intense suffering, to put the key to all spiritual attainments into the hand of the individual and to inaugurate by a new and living way the invisible Church of the Spirit. It is a strange story, a Pilgrim's Progress toward a real city of God, but a story full of bafflement and tragedy as well as of noble, high-spirited endeavour.

The main actors themselves, with all their sincerity and honesty of purpose, were sometimes lacking in plain, ordinary wisdom. They blundered. But it must be admitted that it was a very difficult world of men and women for such a quest as theirs, and it was easy in that world of society to blunder. They were hampered too, seriously hampered, by the limitations of their psychological theories and by their theological ideas which came to them out of the past. They had to work with views which they thought were true. They took for granted that man was a capital ruin, that the "creature" was devoid of any good. It was therefore their problem to find a way to bridge an unbridgeable chasm. How could grace operate in this human realm of utter depravity? The Church answered, Through the miracle of the sacraments. They answered, The soul can by one act of concentration withdraw from everything that is of the "creature," can centre down below all thoughts, desires, and feelings and come back to its pure origin in God. It can live henceforth in such a union with God that He acts in all the soul's actions, He loves in all its love, He is the Life of all its life. What they could not succeed in doing, however, was to make this "discovery"

of theirs *work* here in this practical world. It was so far in to the "centre" of meeting, it was so deep down below all consciousness, and the experience was so completely negative and devoid of content, that the individual could bring back nothing in its hands to show for its solitary journey. Quietism needed the warm and tender objective realities of the Gospel as filling for its abstract and empty fervour. It lacked some concrete way of turning its moments of fecundity into the permanent stuff of moral character and ethical endeavour. It was a noble *mood*, but it was too rare and abstract to be translated into real human life.

## CHAPTER III

### QUIETISM IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

QUIETISM continued in a reduced and modified form for a long time after its great exponents had passed away, and it was an element in all the deeper and intenser religious awakenings of the eighteenth century, particularly in popular Pietism. But nowhere else was Quietism so completely absorbed and carried on in all its essential features as in English and American Quakerism from 1725 to 1825. In the early stages Quaker Quietism developed, as Quietism on the continent had done, by the unconscious maturing of ideas and emotional tendencies which formed a structural part of the mystical inheritance of Friends. We have seen how this form, or fashion, of spirituality burst forth contemporaneously in many parts of the world, and how it seemed to travel abroad among men of various speech as though it were the manifestation of the spirit of the age. There are, however, plain signs of Quietism in Quaker groups before there are any clear evidences of the direct influence upon them of the great continental writers of Quietism, but there soon appear unmistakable indications of the direct influence of outside currents on the thought of the Quaker leaders, and after the 'seventies of the eighteenth century Quietism came in full flood through the translations made by the Quaker preacher and schoolmaster, James Gough.[1] From this time the writings of the

[1] *The Life of Lady Guion, written by herself in French, now abridged and translated into English, etc.* (Bristol, 1772); *The Life of Armelle Nicholas* (translated by James Gough, Bristol, 1772); *Select Lives of Foreigners, eminent in*

continental quietists are to be found in almost every Quaker collection of books, and many a travelling minister carried one or more of these books in the box of indispensable things that went on the journey.

In 1813 William Backhouse of Darlington, assisted by James Ianson, produced a slender little book which proved very useful to Friends. It was called *A Guide to True Peace, or a Method of attaining to Inward and Spiritual Prayer.* It was chiefly compiled from the writings of Fénelon, "Lady Guion" and Molinos, though no quotation marks are used, and the unskilled reader has no way of knowing what is written by the English editors and what is taken over from the French and Italian authors. This tiny book is full-fledged Quietism, and being brief, simple, and easy to read, exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size.

But even before these translations by James Gough appeared, a very similar type of piety pervaded the leading Quaker Journals, and the phrases so characteristic of Molinos, Guyon, Fénelon and Bourignon, were heard everywhere in Quaker "galleries," and were employed in the intimate biographical accounts of spiritual experience.[1] The writings of Molinos had been in general circulation in England since 1688. The main ideas of Antoinette Bourignon's quietistic teachings were so well known in Great Britain that the Assembly of the Scottish Church prepared a Formula in 1711 by which all candidates for the ministry were required to "disown," among other errors and heresies, the "doctrines, tenets

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*Piety* [Peter Poiret, Antoinette Bourignon and others] (Bristol, 1773); reprinted with the addition of *The Life of Francis de Sales, Discourses of Dr. Taulerus, Life of Fénelon, Michael de Molinos, and Thomas à Kempis* (Bristol, 1796). These books were published anonymously, but they were all by James Gough.

[1] The "gallery" is the part of the Quaker meeting-house where the Ministers sit. It is interesting to find Sarah (Lynes) Grubb studying French so that she may be able to read her beloved Fénelon and Guyon in their own tongue. She writes to her husband:

"I have not been in good spirits to-day, but I studied my little French book a good deal of the way, and almost had the conceit to anticipate the reading of Fénelon and Guion *some day* in their own tongue. These pious individuals had surely learnt to possess their souls in patience, which I greatly fear I am deficient in; but if I fast from spiritual as well as temporal delight, let me fast in secret; I will try, as it were, to anoint my head and wash my face." *Letters*, p. 152.

and opinions of Bourignonism." Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, a profoundly quietistic treatise, was a favourite book of Quaker Ministers, both in England and America, as frequent references to it in Journals plainly indicate.

Furthermore, there was a strand of Quietism in the early interpretation of Quakerism which gradually made itself profoundly felt. I have pointed out in the introduction to W. C. Braithwaite's *Second Period of Quakerism* that Robert Barclay (1648–1690) held the central positions of the continental quietists, and that his *Apology* is one of the main direct sources of Quaker Quietism. He accepted the doctrine of the depravity and ruin of "fallen man" as positively and with as little reservation as did John Calvin. Having accepted that point as settled, his main theological problem was to discover how *salvation* can be effected for this fallen being, and how spiritual experiences and processes can begin and can operate in a creature that by "nature" is wholly unspiritual. Barclay's answer and solution is that *God Himself operates* in man, and that everything of a spiritual quality that ever occurs in man comes to be there because God works His miracle of Grace and Light in him and through him. The vehicle of the divine operations in man is, in Barclay's interpretation, "a Seed of God" or a supernatural Light, superadded to "man's nature" as a gift of grace purchased by Christ's sacrifice for fallen man. This "Seed" or "Light" does not belong to "mere man," to man as he is by nature. It is a supernatural contribution divinely made to effect man's escape from his lost and fallen condition, and man's part in the work of salvation is to give the Seed of God an opportunity to operate unhindered and unopposed. Human passivity is, therefore, the great matter. The first step of salvation lies, Barclay says, in man's not working contrary to the Seed.[1] To keep "still," to "wait," to suppress all human process or "creaturely activity" is the preparatory stage for all spiritual operations. Man is power-

[1] Sect. xvii. of the Double Prop. V. and VI. of *Apology*.

less to bring a "visitation" or to accomplish any spiritual work. His part is to "stand and wait." The revelation which results, the intimation that is given, the guidance that is vouchsafed, is wholly "of God," is "pure," "naked" "Truth," without any admixture from beneath.

The *Apology* is beyond question the primary influence which made Friends quietistic. It is not easy to trace the influences which carried Robert Barclay himself toward his type of Quietism. He was born the same year as that in which Madame Guyon was born. He received his foundation education in Paris, in the Scots Theological College, and "having," as he himself says, "a certain felicity of understanding, successful beyond many of my equals in age," he absorbed from his intellectual climate ideas and sentiments which most suited his natural temperament and propensity. And when at a later time he came to formulate his position and his experiences, he revealed a fundamental sympathy with the widespread religious movement of the age, which found the way out of the *impasse* of human depravity through an act of faith in supernatural divine actions, operated in those who succeed in suppressing all human activity—which is Quietism.

But this primary influence of Barclay's writings upon Friends was all the time being supplemented by those other influences already referred to from sources outside the Society, which slowly filtered through the avenues of reading and travel, so that every decade saw the traces of Quietism deepened and more clearly marked.

No Friend of gifts and genius undertook the task in the eighteenth century of interpreting on any profound scale the Quaker ideals and message either to the world or to the membership of the Society. A mild attempt was made in 1725 by Benjamin Holme of York in a little book entitled *A Serious Call.* This book was many times republished during the next hundred years and was circulated widely, but it was not a work of much significance and it reveals no original insight. It contains in brief compass the central ideas of evangelical Christianity,

coloured by the Quaker emphasis on the inner Light and on the absence of outward rites. A special point is made, quite in the quietist manner, of man's inability to know God or the things of God except through a direct revelation by the inward Teacher, and the writer declares that true preaching and praying can proceed only from the Holy Spirit within the person who preaches or prays.[1]

Much more important for its spiritual influence on the members of the Society was the little book entitled *The Grounds of a Holy Life*, by Hugh Turford, a Quaker schoolmaster of Bristol[2] (died 1713). The first edition was printed in 1702. There have been twenty-eight English editions of this little classic, besides American and continental ones. It was translated into French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Danish. There is abundant evidence that Turford's writings were highly appreciated and that they silently worked upon the lives and spirits of Friends through the entire period of Quaker Quietism. *The Grounds of a Holy Life* is a worthy contribution, though humble and simple, to mystical literature. As is true of most Quaker mysticism, the emphasis is put here on "the inner witness wrought in the man himself," on the practice of a pure and holy life, on "righteousness in one's own heart," and on what Turford calls *the exercise of religion*—the practice of the presence of God. He has little use for "words and notions," but a high estimate of obedience to the Light. "Self-denial"—"the denial of everything which proceeds from an evil root"—is recommended as the way to peace and safety. The way to practical holiness is "a narrow way" and it calls always for a deeply *centred* life. No soul can live under "the government of the holy Spirit" without learning self-denial and without strict obedience to the Light which God has put for our guidance and assistance in the hidden

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 35,36.

[2] The full title of the book reads: "The Grounds of a Holy Life: or the Way by which many who were Heathens, came to be Renowned Christians; and such as are now Sinners, may come to be numbered with saints, by Little Preaching. To which is added, Paul's Speech to the Bishop of Cretia, as also, A True Touchstone or Tryal of Christianity." By Hugh Turford.

centre of our souls. He calls his readers away from forms and from all outward things and directs them in true mystical fashion to the inner shrine where all spiritual qualities are brought to birth.

The interpretations which gradually led the membership of the Society, both in Great Britain and America, into a profoundly quietistic type of religion were given by the leading Ministers of the body in their sermons and in their intimate Journals, in which they revealed the processes and stages of their spiritual life. These Journals, with the single exception of that of John Woolman, show a very slender literary skill and meagre power of self-revelation They are not to be for a moment compared with the autobiographies of the great mystical prophets of the fourteenth and fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There are, however, many oases in these barren wastes, and one who travels painfully through the long pages is rewarded by finding occasional fountains of living water. I shall show in a later chapter how these somewhat commonplace men and women, raised to a higher level by strict obedience to their inner Guide and by a loyalty which dared all things, penetrated by an extraordinary itinerancy the entire area of Quakerism with the contagion of their ideals. For the present I shall draw upon their Journals to discover how strong and decided was their drift toward Quietism.

We have in the Quakerism of the eighteenth century, it must be said, an impressive exhibition of a Quietism that was corporate rather than individualistic. Its true significance can be found much more clearly in the subconscious habits of Quaker groups than in even the best autobiographical self-revelations—only we are confronted by the difficulty of transporting ourselves back into the inner, unrevealed life of these communities of a century and a half ago. Everywhere where we can find a clue that leads us back into their prevailing habits, we find in evidence a deep-seated fear of everything "man-made," and we see a variety of methods in operation designed to suppress "own-self" and to hamper or crucify

the "creature." Corporate silence—a silence prolonged unbroken sometimes for hours—came more and more, as the century progressed, to be exalted as the loftiest way of worship. The silence of all flesh, the suppression of all strain and effort, the slowing down of all the mechanism of action, the hushing of all the faculties of thought, were urged as the true preparation for receiving the divine Word.

So much was done to glorify silence and to exalt quiet inward gestation that it called for something almost miraculous to bring one to his feet with a vocal utterance that would break the seal of silence. Dr. Rutty records that twenty-two successive meetings were held in Dublin in 1770 with only a single break of the silence.[1] Meetings like that were common in all parts of the Quaker field, and in some communities words were spoken only when an itinerant Minister broke in upon the unvarying habit of group-stillness. Visiting Ministers furthermore by no means always preached when they came on their journeys. They very often were "dry" and "barren," and felt themselves moved to remain mute so as to "starve the people from words," and to turn them from any trust in the creature. Thomas Scattergood, on one of his religious missions through Western Pennsylvania in 1787, sat through seven successive meetings "closed up as to any public communications,"[2] and his experience can be paralleled by that of many other Ministers who went out under a sense of urgent and unmistakable call to service.

The most insistent note of Quietism, as I have shown, is its distrust of human nature, its call for the annihilation of the self, and its expectation of the manifestation of *a divine work* when once the human powers have been humbled and laid low. This same note is an emphatic, almost dominant, feature of the Quaker Journals of our period, to which we shall now turn. Mary Dudley, who was born in Bristol in 1750, and who passed through

[1] *A Spiritual Diary*, by John Rutty, M.D. (London, 1796), p. 390.
[2] *Memoirs*, p. 27 *et seq.*

an intense period of devotion to Methodism before she became a Friend, expresses a view which is habitual in the Quaker thought of the period in her statement that "when the creature is so reduced as to know indeed that *it* can do nothing, then He who is strength in weakness shows Himself strong."[1] The writings of that refined and saintly Irish Quaker, Richard Shackleton,[2] who was a life-long, intimate friend of Edmund Burke, furnish a good illustration of the profound distrust of the "creature," a distrust which became almost a *phobia* with the "concerned" Friend of that time. He was one of the best Quaker scholars of his period, having studied in his father's school at Ballitore with Burke, and afterwards in the College in Dublin, and he was nobly equipped for a useful life. But he writes in a personal letter already in 1752, at the age of twenty-six, expressing his fear of human learning and its seductive influences:

> Had I kept to my first love, and not suffered the wisdom of the fallen nature to blind and deafen, and, in appearance, almost totally quench, in me the second Adam, which is a quickening spirit, I should not now be without true wisdom, in a captious, deceitful world.[3]

He is afraid of indulging much in conversation even with such spiritually-minded persons as his friend Mary Peisley, who became one of the foremost Ministers of the Society. Of this danger he writes in the same year as above:

> My mind is too apt to be drawn out in these opportunities, from a still, quiet frame, into a flutter and commotion; and the

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[1] *Life of Mary Dudley*, p. 70.

[2] After Yearly Meeting in London, Richard Shackleton generally visited Edmund Burke at Beaconsfield each year. He speaks of his visit in 1780 as follows: "The Yearly Meeting being over, I went to see Edmund Burke. Having given him notice of the hour of my intended visit, he had come from the House of Commons, and was ready, with his family, to receive me. The friendship, the freedom, the cordiality with which he and his embraced me, was rather more than might be expected from long love. I could not well avoid coming with him to this place, which is most beautiful, on a very large scale: the house furniture, ornaments, conveniences, all in a grand style. Six hundred acres of land, woods, pleasure-grounds, gardens, green-houses, etc. For my part, I stand astonished at the man and at his place of abode: a striking parallel may be drawn between them; they are sublime and beautiful indeed." *Memoirs and Letters of Richard and Elizabeth Shackleton* (London, 1822), p. 102.

[3] *Memoirs and Letters*, p. 9.

affections of the creature to steal gradually into the room of the *pure love* of the Creator, who is ever jealous of his just right.[1]

His tender advice to his daughter Margaret shows this same deep-seated fear and his estimate of the value of self-suppression :

Mayst thou, dear child, be preserved in simplicity and nothingness of self; in humility and lowliness of mind, seeking diligently after, and waiting steadily for, the inward experience of that which is *unmixedly good*. This is the way to be helped along from day to day, through one difficulty and proving after another, to the end of our wearisome pilgrimage.[2]

To a friend he declares that "a state of emptiness, nothingness and abasement of self" is "our centre," *i.e.* the inner condition in which the life can manifest itself.[3] Two more brief passages from letters will make this central idea of his mind sufficiently clear :

To keep low and humble, to step cautiously and feelingly, to watch diligently over the movements in our own minds, to wait for that baptizing virtue which makes and preserves sweet and clean, to be as good servants, ready for every occasional duty which may be unexpectedly required : this is the state we desire to be found in, and wish it was more our experience.

My cry is for humility and wisdom, that I may be mercifully preserved myself from falling, and that I may not be tempted to exceed the life and authority of truth.[4]

The most extraordinary and unique Quaker document for a study of this excessive fear of the "creature" and for an exhibition of a life-long battle with "self" is Doctor John Rutty's *Spiritual Diary* (London, 1796). He was a physician of real distinction, a man of learning and of wide reading. His religious sympathies were broad and inclusive. He had, as his biographer says, "an uncommon tenderness of conscience," and he experienced, in 1754,

[1] *Memoirs and Letters*, p. 10.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 67. These expressions "simplicity" and "nothingness of self" and "unmixed" (or *pure*) "good" are well-known phrases of Quietism, and the term "centre" is frequent in all quietist literature.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 133.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 123 and 131. "To watch diligently over the movements in our own mind" is a phrase which does not fit the ideal of the great continental quietists. They aimed to get *beyond* the necessity of inquiring after concrete inward "states."

an "irradiation" of spiritual light, which profoundly affected him through the rest of his life.[1]

One irradiation of his "memorable æra," as he calls the period of his experience, showed him that "it is criminal not to hate this life," and henceforth the "battle" of the two worlds was on. There are four hundred and twenty pages of introspective diagnosis of his inner state in which phrases like the following continually recur: "Old Adam yet unslain; sticks like birdlime." "Not yet delivered from captivity to the world's spirit." "No devil like that in my own bosom." "Still snappish." "Very brittle." "Feasted beyond the holy bounds." "Sinned in smoking for mere pleasure, not for health." "Patience over-exercised in the detention of medical fees." "I am still only a spiritual embryo." "Sinfully cholerick on a slight provocation." "Do less in medicine and nature, saith the Lord, and more in spirituals." "Suspected myself of rottenness of heart in robbing God of devotion for temporal converse." "Must resign my studies which deal only with the body." "Attended a feast and not a word about Christ spoken." "O my grovelling tendency to the study of terrestrial matters." "Wean me, O Lord, from the world and from the specious glitterings of natural science." "Much in arrears to my soul, not to my body." "A lively sense of death at hand, and so visited my grave-digger."

But with all his self-pessimism he admits that he is making some success in restraining flesh and appetite, and is gaining a little in heavenly-mindedness: "Neither men nor angels," he writes near the end of his strange life, "shall persuade me that I am not growing in grace."[2]

The timid, shrinking, trembling walk with God of a confirmed quietist is everywhere in evidence in John Churchman's *Journal*. In 1748, as he sat in "a week-day Meeting in winter," "the divine presence was felt in

[1] *Spiritual Diary*, p. 13. This irradiation of new gospel light came to Rutty from his reading of the Port Royal writers.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 402. Doctor Rutty mentions the great influence upon himself of the writings of Thomas à Kempis, Brother Lawrence, and of the Port Royal School, "Messieurs du Port-Royal" he calls them.

reverent profound silence," "the gentle operation of the divine power caused a secret inward trembling," and he heard the following words uttered in a language intelligent to the inward man, "Gather thyself from all the cumbers of the world, and be thou weaned from the popularity, love and friendship thereof."[1] Soon after this experience he was sorely tempted by being asked to serve as a Justice of the Peace. "For a short time," he says, "I was exceedingly straitened, but my eye being fixed on the Lord for counsel, it pleased Him in great condescension once more to revive the sentence before-mentioned, 'Gather thyself from all the cumbers of the world, etc.,' which to me settled the point and I became easy in mind."[2]

John Woolman, who was an intimate personal friend of Churchman, shows the quietist temper in all the aspects of his religious life, both outer and inner. He, more frequently than any other Quaker preacher of the eighteenth century, uses the quietist word "pure" to denote inward, spiritual *operations* which he believed to be absolutely the work of God within, without any alloy of the "creature"—such phrases, for example, as "I felt *pure* Truth rise in me"; "I found it necessary to dwell deep in that Wisdom which is *pure*"; "Meetings in which the *pure* life is allowed to rise"; "keeping faithful to the *pure* gift"; "the *pure* flowings of divine Love which arose in my mind"; "the *pure* guidance of the holy Spirit"; "the spring of *pure* Love"; "the *pure* openings of Truth"; "that no motion might in the least degree be attended to but that of the *pure* spirit of Truth"; "my heart was deeply concerned that I might keep steadily to *pure* Truth"; "establishment in the *pure* life of Truth"; "the *pure* counsel of Truth."

Like his friend Churchman he was palpitatingly tender and sensitive in his fear of the world and its occupations. "I saw," he says, "that if I would live such a life as the faithful servants of God lived I must not go into company as heretofore in *my own will*, but all the cravings of sense must be governed by a divine Principle." And later,

[1] *Journal*, p. 104. [2] *Ibid.* p. 105.

after his marriage, he was impressed with the feeling that "Truth did not require" him to "engage much in cumbering affairs." He had a "stop in his mind" against trading in "things which served chiefly to please the vain mind," and gradually the "opening" changed from the negative to the positive and closed up all "natural inclination toward merchandise" with the clear insight: "Truth required me to live more free from outward cumbers."[1] It must not be forgotten that Woolman eventually came upon extremely important sociological principles for the conduct of life, but primarily his own way of living had its ground and origin in his individualistic religious Quietism. "Death to own-will," "a quiet centering down to perfect resignation" was a supreme aspiration of his beautiful spirit.[2] He sums up the controlling principle of his life in the words: "In all my labours I was exercised to watch diligently against *the motions of self* in my own mind."[3]

Sarah Grubb (born Tuke, 1756) had, in a very unusual measure, this intense aspiration to achieve "the annihilation of own self." She declares that the giving of life itself will seem a small sacrifice "when our nothingness is sufficiently felt."[4] "I am often afraid," she wrote in 1780, "lest, by indulging my own ideals of what is good, and not labouring after *a total resignation* of mind, . . . I should frustrate the divine intention, which may be to humble and reduce self more than flesh and blood would point out."[5] Her Diary reveals on almost every page the sincerity of the wish which she expressed in 1785 that "every specious appearance of self-love may be consumed and the spring of action of both religious and moral duties rendered *pure*."[6]

Job Scott (born in Providence, Rhode Island, 1751), like all these other tender souls, was very anxious to keep absolutely free from "the snares and entanglements" of secular business. "Flee," he cries, "flee, O Zion-ward

[1] Woolman's *Journal*, pp. 57 and 91.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 203, 207 and 252.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 270.
[4] *Life and Labours*, p. 23.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 29.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 119.

traveller, for thy life from all these allurements";[1] and for himself he says: "I feel breathings of soul to be set at liberty from bondage of earthly cares."[2] Finally, as his spiritual nature matured and as he felt more insistently the prophetic call, he heard this message "run livingly through his mind":

Thou art called and appointed, and through many and deep tribulations, I have separated thee a prophet to the nations. Thou hast very little more ever to do in the business and affairs of this life. Gather thy mind from all cumbering things, and stand singly and wholly devoted to my work, service, and appointment. Regard not the world; thou must be about thy Heavenly Father's business; thou must attend to my directions, and submit therein to thy proper allotment. My will and purpose require and loudly call, and have called, for greater dedication of heart and singleness of devotion to my work and service in the glorious gospel. Take no thought for the morrow: do to-day what thou findest to do, in my light, and in the liberty and allotment of my holy Spirit. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will assuredly give thee a crown of life. I will hold thee in my holy hand forever. I will provide for and take care of thy motherless, and, as it were, fatherless children, in thy absence.[3]

Thomas Shillitoe (born in London, 1754) is one of the best examples of the Quaker quietist in the entire list of English and American Ministers. Soon after his call to "the awful work" of ministry, he became very sensitive about the character of his occupation and conscientiously zealous that he might procure a living in some business that would not in any way mar his spirit or hamper him in the exercise of the gift conferred upon him. His own account of the solution of his deep perplexities shows how native to his disposition the quietistic attitude was and how implicitly he believed in providential oversight and direct divine guidance even in the minute details of life.

"My mind," he says, "became deeply exercised with the subject of a change in my manner of getting my livelihood, accompanied with earnest cravings of soul that the Lord would be pleased to direct me herein. He in mercy, I believe, heard

[1] *Journal of Job Scott*, p. 112. [2] *Ibid.* p. 118. [3] *Ibid.* p. 400.

my cries and answered my supplications, pointing out to me the business I was to be willing to take for a future livelihood, as intelligibly to my inner ear, the ear of my soul, as ever words were expressed clearly and intelligibly to my outward ear."[1]

"The mind of Truth" pointed out to him as his occupation the trade of a shoemaker, and, in a succession of events, affecting his life and his career, he now felt his heavenly Guide "directing all his steppings," including the selection of his wife.

Believing it would be to my advantage every way to change my condition in life, I besought the Lord to guide me by His counsel in taking this very momentous step; and I thought I had good ground to believe He was pleased to grant my request, and pointed out to me one who was to be my companion for life, Mary Pace.[2]

In 1790, twelve years after his marriage, he was brought into "secret plungings" of spirit almost too great to bear, through the intimation of a call to travel in religious ministry. It seemed to him utterly impossible to leave his shop and his family and to go forth to the service which opened before him, but suddenly, as he was cutting his leather, "the calming influence of divine help" fell upon his tired spirit, as he had never felt it before, and he heard a voice promising that his business and his home should be guarded "with more than bolts and bars." His cutting knife fell from his hand and he no longer hesitated to bring his "opening" to his Monthly Meeting, from which he received a certificate for the service. From that time until his weary body was laid in its quiet grave in 1836, he was almost continually engaged in public service and on journeys far from home.

As his spiritual exercises increased, the words were plainly impressed on his inward ear: "Gather up thy wares into thine house, for I have need of the residue of thy days." It was thus laid upon his mind that he must be wholly free from the cares of business and the affairs of life, and "be at liberty" for the calls of his Lord. At

[1] *Journal of the Life and Labours of Thomas Shillitoe* (London, 1839), vol. i. p. 6.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 9.

the same time the promise was added: "The little meal in the barrel and the little oil in the cruse, of temporal property, shall not fail." He writes:

As the subject continued to remain with me with increasing clearness and weight, I saw no way for me to move with safety, but to make my prospects generally known amongst my Friends, of my desire to part with my business. About the Fifth month, 1805, I turned my business over to a Friend; shortly after making this sacrifice, a person from whom I never had the least possible expectation of bequeathing to me any part of her property, added to my store by will one hundred pounds, which I received as a mark of the merciful interference of my Heavenly Benefactor.[1]

A year later he underwent "deep plungings of spirit" through the discovery that still further sacrifices of outward substance were required of him and that he must still more effectually free himself from worldly encumbrance. Under this test of faith, and struggling "with a tribulated state of mind," he had a dream which finely reveals his tender, sensitive spirit and a temperament closely allied to that of Woolman.

I saw before me a straight but very narrow path gradually rising, at the foot of which stood a man very simply attired, who offered to take the charge of safely guiding me up. I followed him: when we had reached about two-thirds of the way up, my guide halted, turned himself round, requested me to do the same, which I accordingly complied with. He then bid me take a view both on the right hand and on the left of the road I had been ascending: on my right hand, the ground in the bottom appeared rocky and uncultivated, pretty much covered with rubbish, grass and trees that had been stunted in their growth; these I was told were fit for nothing but the fire, and that they were comparable to those whose hearts continued to be like the stony and thorny ground. I then turned me to take a view on my left hand, at which I shuddered within myself, when my guide pointed out to me the dangerous precipice I had travelled close to the edge of. The foundation of the path I had been travelling on, to the bottom, appeared as steep as a house side; which led me to conclude, the path my guide had thus far conducted me on must be founded on a rock, otherwise the path

[1] *Journal of the Life and Labours of Thomas Shillitoe*, vol. i. pp. 39, 40.

being so very narrow on which I had been travelling, from the weight of my body I must have been precipitated into the vast, deep, open, barren space which I beheld, and in which, on my left hand, I observed a number of persons huddled together, at times grubbing with their hands in the earth, and at other times as if they were employing themselves in tossing the earth from one hand to the other, every now and then looking one at the other, with a sort of consciousness, that this manner in which they were employing their time was spending it in vain, and saying one to another, "I am countenanced in spending my time in this manner by thee," and another, "I am countenanced by thee." On which I queried with my guide, "What does this all mean? These men do not look like common labourers, neither have they such tools as common day-labourers use; besides this, they are all clad in very nice and costly apparel, like men of the first rank in the world with respect to property." But my guide assured me, although they thus appeared apparelled, and were rich in worldly substance, wanting nothing this world could bestow upon them to make them as happy as it was capable of making them; yet, having made the riches of time their chief hope for happiness, they had become so estranged in love and affection from that Divine Power which only can make truly happy, that they are completely miserable. My guide, turning round, bid me follow him; and as we began again to ascend, instructed me to keep very near to him, continually reminding me, that although I had mercifully escaped the danger, which those I had observed in the vast, deep, open, barren space had fallen into, yet I was not out of the way of danger of becoming their companion in misery; that my safety altogether depended on my keeping continually near to him, eyeing him in every step I took from day to day, without which I should still become precipitated into the same vast, deep, open, barren space with these miserable persons whom my eyes had beheld, and become their doleful companion in all their disappointments. When I awoke, the danger which I seemed to have escaped on both hands, but more especially so, the danger I seemed to have escaped on my left hand, made such an impression on my mind, that for several days afterwards little besides it came before me:—the subject of my being willing to offer up my leasehold property a sacrifice to the Lord still following me.[1]

This fear of being tainted by outward things continued to exercise him throughout his life. He writes in 1823:

[1] *Journal of the Life and Labours of Thomas Shillitoe*, vol. i. pp. 51-53.

Fourth day I went to Barnsley; some outward affairs there claimed my attention, which brought me under fresh exercise of mind, fearing I should become improperly involved in them. Earnest were my cries, whilst on my way there, for preservation from any of the wiles of the evil power; to escape which, I was strengthened to make some temporal sacrifices.[1]

In an Epistle which he felt "moved" to write in 1820 to Friends in Great Britain and Ireland he urged them not to sail out very far on "the wide ocean of trade and commerce where there are tempestuous billows," and his advice is "retrench your business and regulate your family expenses accordingly." His timorous and shrinking spirit appears again in the counsel:

> Friends, let us not dare to meddle with political matters but renewedly seek for holy help to starve that disposition. Keep that ear closed which will be itching to hear the news of the day. . . . Avoid reading political publications, and, as much as possible, newspapers.[2]

A striking passage in his *Journal* declares his constant aspiration to become "like a cork on the ocean, wafted hither and thither as the Spirit of God should blow"; to be absolutely mobile and perfectly calm whatever the trend of surface currents might be; to be wholly free from the lead of human reason, and from the preferences of flesh and blood.[3] It is his frequent prayer that he might be "like wax before the fire ready to receive every impression of the divine will"; to "have no desire left" to choose his own lot; to feel "entire resignation to the divine will" whatever suffering may be involved;[4] and to be "loosened from every earthly shackle." He is always engaged in the process of slaying self and self-activity, of weaning himself from all dependence on man, of "centering down" through "the rubbish of surfeiting cares and the concerns of this present life" to the precious seed buried in the heart.[5] These are verbatim expressions of the continental quietists, and his fundamental type of religion

[1] *Journal of the Life and Labours of Thomas Shillitoe*, vol. ii. p. 13.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 218-224.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 230.
[4] *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 259 and 261.
[5] *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 29 and 58.

is almost precisely theirs, when due allowance is made for the diverse traditional practices of the Roman Catholic and the Quaker.

The natural psychological result of this intense aspiration to annihilate the "creature" and to become wholly free from "the lead of human reason" was an excessive tendency to be introspective, to watch with minute and painstaking observation "the inner flow of things." The focus of attention was turned upon inner states, and the mind in its long periods of withdrawal from objective happenings was likely to be occupied with an eager examination of all the inner "states" passing before the footlights of consciousness, to discover which ones bore the mark and brand of own-self and which ones appeared to be from beyond the regions of self, and so divinely given. The face of the devoted saint was thus turned away from the tasks of the world and busied with a refined discrimination between those inner pointings which could be referred to a higher source and those feelings and willings and thoughts which were due to native faculties. His problems were in the main these inner problems, and not those that are concerned with the building of the city of God in the world of our complicated social relationships. He became an introspective expert, but he gathered little power to grapple with the massive tasks with which the human society of his day was crowded. Another difficulty was inherently involved in this desire to force the citadel of self completely to capitulate. It was an aspiration which threw profound suspicion and distrust upon those very God-given powers by which men are equipped to live the abundant life, and by which they are able to serve the world in which they are bound to work out their earthly destiny. If "the lead of human reason" is to be destroyed and all the faculties of mind and heart are to be annihilated, that means that *this* world has no mission in our spiritual training, and that no processes which expand our capacities of judgment, and which discipline our will, and which fashion our character are of any value. The very furnishings for our

momentous voyage through "time and mutability" are to be jettisoned as soon as possible, and we are to sail only as we are blown by breezes which come wholly from another world. It is a situation which a rigid dualism of "worlds" forces upon one, and these Friends saw no way out of it. In that hard strait they accepted it with all its stern consequences and made their uttermost sacrifice out of sheer loyalty to their light—the highest and clearest their souls could see.

In addition to these more or less superficial parallelisms with Quietism, the Quaker itinerant ministers reveal, in their experiences and in their ideals of piety, marks of a profounder similarity to the continental quietists. Like the latter, they, too, passed through periods of "strippings," of "dryness" and of "desertion," and they had to learn to be patient in "dark seasons," to rise above or be indifferent to "states of feeling," and to hold to the pure faith that God is as near, as loving, and as operative in the "dry season" as in the times of "fresh bubblings."

Rebecca Jones describes, as Madam Guyon might have done, this dark night of the soul:

> And the Lord, my only Helper in this night of probation, saw meet in His wisdom, for the trial of my faith, to hide His face from me. . . . Oh the grief and distress of my poor soul! The divine presence was withdrawn, and I had no friend on earth to speak to.[1]

Catharine Phillips gives a good sample account of this painful experience:

> After my return from this meeting, I was stripped of that strength wherewith the Almighty had been pleased to clothe me; which, with some other discouragements I met with, sunk me very low, insomuch that I was ready to doubt of all I had known, and to call in question my commission to minister: and my soul was attacked by the adversary in some of his most subtle appearances, and baptized into *a cloud of darkness*. This dispensation I afterwards saw to be serviceable.[2]

Job Scott after having experienced "a fulness of

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 10. A fuller account of this interesting woman will be given in later chapters.

[2] *Life*, p. 194.

heavenly joy" such as few could believe possible, and having felt "the well-spring of living water" burst forth in his soul, passed over into a terrible season of "drought." "He, knowing what was best for me," Scott testifies, "graciously hid His presence from me."

> And though this was a painful suspension, yet I could not be easy to give over seeking him; I still continued by ardent silent approaches, or waitings. I halted, indeed, with all the reverence, humility, and solicitude that my soul was capable of; but all seemed in vain. No spark or ray of light could I behold, no glimpse of heaven's returning favour. Oh! the mourning and lamentation, the distress and bitter weeping, that almost continually overwhelmed me for several months together, for the want of the soul-enlivening presence of my God. Oh! said I in my heart, will he ever rise for my help and deliverance? Well, be it as it may, I will seek him until my dying day; my soul cannot live without him; and it may be, if he hide his face from me until my last moments, he may own me at that solemn period, and receive me to a mansion of glory.
>
> O my God! thou leddest me through the desert, thou weanedst me from the world, and alluredst me into the wilderness: there thou didst hide thy face from me for a season; until the longings of my soul after thee were intensely kindled: then liftedst thou up my head, and spake comfortably to me; blessed be thy holy name forever!
>
> Though the Lord still at times withdrew from me, yet as his return was not long after, and as his presence was much more constantly with me, I was ready to conclude it would continue with increasing brightness, till I should be wholly and continually swallowed up in his love.[1]

Sarah Grubb had days of "deep probation," "frequent desertions of spirit," bitter "afflictive dispensations," and baptisms of "stripping," but she was favoured to see that it was all a part of the "progressive dispensation" of her heavenly Teacher.[2]

Experiences of this dark and afflicting type are as old as the history of spiritual travail. The path of intense love is never smooth and easy, and any inner condition of life which is intimately bound up with the emotions is certain to sweep through a wide curve of extremes. The

[1] *Journal*, pp. 47, 48.

[2] *Life and Labours*, pp. 46, 67 and 76.

glowing joy of triumphant union will give place to the desolation of isolation and loneliness *as long as one lives at the level of moods.* The great achievement of the supreme mystics is their final arrival at a stage of life above the fluctuating temperature of moods. They reach at the summit of their spiritual pilgrimage a calm level, above the storms of passion and emotion, above the mutable climate of inner weather, where God lives in the soul and the soul lives in God in an undivided union. The painful quest for "states" and for "tokens" is over and the soul is for ever at home with the Father. There are no "desertions" and no moments of "desolation" when the final goal is reached, and therefore these trials are always signs that the road has not been travelled "all the way to the very top."

These Quaker Ministers of the eighteenth century not only agree with their kindred quietists in having their "periods of desertion," but they also agree with the latter in their emphasis on the necessity of *inward crucifixion* as a preparation for service. There is hardly a single Journal which does not tell of "the hard baptism of the cross." This experience of the cross was essentially bound up with the central aspiration to annihilate "self," and, as we should expect, the crucifying cross comes to individuals in a great variety of concrete ways and forms. Sometimes it appears in the form of a physical affliction, sometimes in the form of hard and bitter loss, sometimes as a call to a service involving tremendous sacrifice, sometimes in the form of agonizing inward states, sometimes as an intimation to adopt the peculiar Quaker costume, or to take up a course of life which will bring a thorough break with the line of life previously pursued.

John Woolman's whole life was a "daily dying," and, though no one concrete and isolated act can be singled out as his baptism of crucifixion, he has given that most beautiful account that any Quaker has preserved of the fact of "death to own-will," which has been recorded in an earlier chapter.[1]

[1] See p. 25.

Job Scott, who seems to me to exhibit most completely of any of the Americans the quietistic ideal, went all the hard way through his experience of the Cross, through what he calls "the perfect death of all things that are not God,"[1] being always "straitened until he had accomplished the work of dying wholly" to own-desire.[2] For him the entire work of Christ in history is to be re-lived and repeated in the experience of the individual Christian, and Scott endeavoured with all his might to practise what he taught. His point of view is well presented in the following passage:

> And do not the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, as plainly point out to us the necessity of a life of obedience, self-denial, and death unto sin, as ever outward circumcision pointed out the circumcision of the heart? And is it not on the very ground of this necessity of a real self-denial, and death to sin, that Christ insists upon it, that whoever will be his disciple, must first deny himself, take up his daily (mark daily) cross, and follow him? Follow him!—what is that? Why it is to take his holy Spirit for our leader and guide into all truth; to take him for our pattern and example; and to follow him, wheresoever he leadeth us, in the way of regeneration, self-denial, the loss of our own life, and death unto all sin![3]

In this serious resolution to go the whole way with Christ in His Cross-bearing, we leave behind all dependence upon forensic schemes and all hope of salvation as a fiat of Grace. These Friends had undoubtedly made that great venture. They were done with the entire forensic business, with all its casuistry and quibbles. They looked for no salvation which had not cost *themselves* blood and sweat and agony. Where their Saviour had gone in His mighty agony over sin, their own trembling, bleeding feet were to follow. The last rag of self-merit was to be torn away, and the last remnant of own-will was to be nailed to the tree of death. They would go down into death *with Him*, and they would, if God pleased to grant anew His marvellous power, come forth with Him into resurrection-life. This experience and nothing short of this could be counted for them salvation.

[1] *Journal*, p. 252. [2] *Ibid.* p. 173. [3] *Ibid.* p. 524.

Another feature of common Quaker teaching and practice which is in parallelism with continental Quietism was the deep-seated view that all religious exercises, and in a peculiar sense *prayer*, are of spiritual value and efficacy only as they are divinely "moved" and "initiated." Man as man can do nothing of spiritual import. His own powers, his human faculties, his native yearnings, desires, insights and ideals do not carry him to a spiritual level. If he speaks merely because he has something helpful to say, or if he sets out to perform a service because he perceives that it needs doing, or if he prays merely because his human heart has hungers, aspirations and social sympathies, those "exercises" are still in the "creature," and do not "get the blessing." All action that rises to the true religious level must be the result of a divine moving and must be due to *a work of God* in the soul. "To utter a request to God rightly," Job Scott declared, "always requires His divine, living, immediate assistance."[1] Here we are back again in the toils of that ancient pessimism over the native capacity of man which denies that man as man can be a spiritual being or exercise spiritual functions. This position, which was as sacred and indubitable to the Quaker as the real presence in the bread and wine to the Roman Catholic, cost the itinerant ministers more suffering than any other single article of their faith, and was to many the way to "the baptism of the cross."

Abroad, as they were, on divine commission, and in constant attendance of meetings, they could yet never speak in either testimony or prayer until they were "moved" for each particular occasion. They "appointed" meetings for "the world's people" often without any absolute prevision that they would be given words to speak to the multitude. They were compelled again and again to sit in mute silence through meeting after meeting, sometimes for continuous weeks on end without a divine fiat, while both the minister himself and the people wondered what could be the occasion for the

[1] *Journal*, p. 70.

sealing of the lips of one who had been sent out as a herald. It was in a very real way a crucifying time—but still the theory held that when God wanted words spoken He would communicate them for the occasion. How profoundly this idea held the Quaker mind, and how supernatural the work was believed to be, appear admirably in a letter of Richard Shackleton's in 1780:

The meeting was large, and I think, as to "instrumental help," favoured. James Gough and Mary Ridgway had, in my apprehension, good times. What a wonderful blessing to the church is a living ministry! and how precious a thing and admirable it is for a human creature to be qualified to speak in the name of the Lord! and for human nature to be influenced by a supernatural power! The frequency of such appearances among us, like those of the sun, moon, and stars, and the process of vegetation, by the familiarity, takes off from the astonishment; but still, great and marvellous are the works of the Almighty.

Job Scott, whom everybody wanted to hear, went about through all the meetings of Pennsylvania and New Jersey in 1786 with hardly a word given him to communicate. He writes:

On the 10th, I had a meeting at Fair Hill; I was silent there.

Fourth-day, 11th, had a meeting at Germantown, in which my lot was in silence.

Fifth-day, 12th, attended the Youths' General Meeting at Byberry, and suffered still in silence, feeling myself as a stranger, a pilgrim on the earth; and, in the depth of my distress, I said in my heart, Lord, why hast Thou thus forsaken me? Thou knowest I have given up all that is near and dear to me in this world to follow Thee and Thy call into this land; my dear wife and tender offspring I have left behind me, and come forth thus far into a land I know not; and I can appeal to Thee, O my God! that it is only in obedience to Thy will and requirings. Why then am I thus left? why feel I myself so destitute and forsaken of all good? why see I no way cast up to walk in? Thus, or to this purpose, I bemoaned my desolate condition, and spread my case before the Lord my God with tears, but all in a good degree of resignation: and after a little space, being fully satisfied all would work for good, I was made willing to be as poor, empty, and blind as the Lord would have me to be, and all centred in this: "Not my will, but Thine be done."[1]

[1] *Journal*, p. 206.

For some days after this surrender of resignation he was "still shut up" in silence and in mystery, as further entries in his *Journal* of the following type indicate:

"I attended meeting at Gwynedd, my tongue, as it were, cleaving to the roof of my mouth"; and his comment on successive meetings is: "I am learning contentment, and to endure famine, drought, and hunger, patiently."[1] Again he writes in agony: "For twenty days past I have not dared to open my mouth in one of the public meetings for worship that I have attended; I have been at fifteen."[2]

As usual, John Woolman gives the best and most beautiful account of this quietistic attitude:

> Being thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and which taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to His flock.[3]

His account of his "exercises" in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for 1759—a very important epoch for the formation of the Quaker position on human slavery—is very instructive for the light it throws on the custom of waiting for the moving of the spirit:

> This meeting continued near a week. For several days, in the fore part of it, my mind was drawn into a deep inward stillness, and being at times *covered with the spirit of supplication*, my heart was secretly poured out before the Lord. Near the conclusion of the meeting for business, *way opened in the pure flowings of Divine love for me to express what lay upon me*, which, as it then arose in my mind, was first to show how deep answers to deep in the hearts of the sincere and upright.[4]

During a visit to Friends, on the island of Nantucket, he waited long and patiently in silence for a "moving" to pray, and he sat for hours until the divine work was wrought:

> I spent my time in my chamber, chiefly alone; and after

[1] *Journal*, p. 207.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 223.
[3] Woolman's *Journal*, p. 61.
[4] *Journal*, p. 144.

some hours, my heart being filled with the spirit of supplication, my prayers and tears were poured out before my Heavenly Father for his help and instruction in the manifold difficulties which attended me in life.[1]

Thomas Scattergood at times passed through even harder wading than that which Job Scott has recorded. For weeks at a time he sat "in a stripped and tried condition, having naught to say." He records many experiences like these sample ones which follow:

I sat the meeting through in silence, and was favoured to drop a tear in resignation, not daring *to put forth a hand to steal* [*i.e.* not daring to speak his *own* words].

Attended Westland Meeting, which came next in course: I was closely exercised in humble silent waiting to know my Master's will concerning me; and was favoured to drop my silent tears in resignation to my allotment; the way appearing closed up as to any public communication amongst these people, whom I have taken so much pains to come and see.

Whilst speaking [again at Westland Meeting] I met with a sudden stop in my mind as to the expression of more words, and found it safest to sit down, and experienced peace in doing so.[2]

Even his heart's prayers for his remote family are offered only on occasions when they are divinely initiated:

Whilst I sat in company and conversation at a Friend's house, my mind was very suddenly impressed with weight and solemnity, and giving way to it, my dear wife and family, and also companions, and in a very particular manner my son, were brought into remembrance, and under a precious exercise of spirit I kneeled down and prayed for them.[3]

Every "exercise" performed by previous arrangement or prepared for in advance seemed to Friends of this period, and to all Friends who continued to live under the sway of this quietistic influence, "will-worship," or "creaturely activity." Nothing spiritual, it was assumed, could flow out of the human "vessel" until it had first flowed in from above, a position which rests upon the ground that man and God are sundered beings, and that man in his own nature is spiritually sterile. This position has, of course, been held again and again by single

[1] *Journal*, p. 170.
[2] *Memoirs*, pp. 26, 27 and 31.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 70.

individuals, but no other religious body of much magnitude except the Society of Friends in its quietistic period has ever put it to a long practical, experimental test as a working basis of ministry. So deeply rooted, however, did this quietistic ideal come to be in the mental habits and practices of Friends that for more than a century they themselves believed it to be an elemental aspect of spiritual religion, and they supposed, quite uncritically and unhistorically, that the founders of the Quaker Society shared this view of ministry and prayer with them. It is true, of course, that the primitive Friends stoutly insisted upon the necessity of a divine anointing, and upon an immediate work of the spirit in all religious undertakings, but they did not by any means go to the extreme terminus which their descendants reached in their view of the complete bankruptcy of human nature.

There is no more striking illustration in the early nineteenth century of the way Quietism had taken possession of the leaders of Quaker thought than that given in the sermons of Elias Hicks (born on Long Island, New York, 1748). I shall in a later chapter deal at length with his religious ideas, but I must indicate very briefly in this chapter the complete quietistic temper of this rugged personality. He uses the phrases of the great quietists; he has no faith in "mere man"; he desires, as the highest spiritual attainment, to be "nothing," and he has a fear of "creaturely activity." Here is an interesting specimen of his Quietism:

> I felt nothing when I came into this meeting, nor had I a desire after anything, but to *centre down into abasement and nothingness*: and in this situation I remained for a while, till I found something was stirring and rising in my spirit. And *this was what I laboured after,—to be empty, to know nothing, to call for nothing, and to desire to do nothing.*[1]

He has given in another sermon a very good quietistic account of worship, and it is, in the main, the view which prevailed among the Friends of that period, as they assembled to their meetings:

[1] *The Quaker* (Phila., 1827), vol. i. p. 47.

"Peace, be still." This command and requisition was made upon a former occasion; and I apprehend it will apply fully to us. I believe there can be no occasion to demand it more than the present one. The comfort and improvement of this large assembly depends principally upon it. Therefore, it becomes our duty individually to labour to be still. . . . We must endeavour to have our minds still. And here is a much greater work, which it is beyond the power of man to effect of himself. And this shows us the necessity of individually endeavouring to get our bodies still, so that we may retire to that fountain of strength, which only can enable us to experience our minds to be brought into stillness—into silent prostration before the King of heaven. . . . None can worship Him, the Almighty Creator of the universe, till all these unruly passions, all these disturbances and troubles that naturally attend men and women in their natural state, are all brought down into entire subjection to the divine will, and until there is a complete sense of His greatness, and of our nothingness. Here it is, that we are brought into a condition to learn of Him. For what will it avail any of us, to come and sit down thus together, to be led, and guided, and instructed in the way of salvation, if we do not gather into a state, whereby and wherein we can be instructed—into a situation in which we can hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches? And it is my earnest desire, that we may individually labour after this stillness; for this is the travail that ought always to attend our minds when thus assembled together. This leads to an experience and evidence in ourselves, of the mighty power of God, and of our own complete insufficiency to do any good thing.[1]

In this same sermon, which was preached in Philadelphia in 1826, he sets forth, with a rigour which would have satisfied even Madame Guyon, the position that no prayer *is* prayer until the worshipper prays the words that are divinely given to him, so that he speaks as an "oracle." Here is his statement:

I have known some to say to a brother, pray! Now, what presumption! It is taking the seat of God immediately, and presuming to be God, and to be exalted above all that is called God and worshipped. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth," and not man. Should man undertake to do a single thing in God's work without the command of God? If

[1] *The Quaker* (Phila., 1827), vol. i. pp. 105-107.

he does, he is a fool. . . . My desire, therefore, is, that we may so sink down in this meeting, as to come to a right view of these things, and be delivered from any attempt arising from the contrivance of the creature, whether to promote religion or anything else, till we are convinced that it is from the will of our heavenly Father. We must feel His power; we must have an evidence of His light to show us the way; and then we can go on without fear or trembling.[1]

He even goes so far as to insist that silence and stillness themselves are divinely given, and cannot be effected by any "ability" or "contrivance" of man.[2] In fact, there is absolutely nothing which man can do of himself to promote any spiritual undertaking. His only function is to obliterate everything that pertains to his own nature, and to let God work unhindered. The following passage sums up as well as any Quaker statement the Quietism which had become an unescapable atmosphere in which the Society lived:

I am willing to unite with you in an ardent travail of soul, to sink out of ourselves and everything appertaining to us, and to come down into that state recommended to the disciples—to keep out of all contrivance and improper imaginations and thoughts, for we sin in thought. Therefore, the most happy state that we can enjoy, is *a state without desire or thought*; for then we are the Lord's, we are in His hands, and here we are in a state of safety—we have no excitement to do anything, but to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which the righteous have experienced in every age of the world. Therefore let us all stand still; and if we have power to pray to Him at all, let it be that He may keep us in this state of resignation, till He shall come and enable us to glorify His great name above all, who is God blessed, forever.[3]

We have seen how these apostolic visitors were often compelled to sit in silence and to *wait*, frequently with no sign of opening, for a moving of the Spirit. In the course of time they formed two interesting conclusions by one or the other of which they explained, to themselves at least, why on occasion no message came to them for the people. It could not be that God was

[1] *The Quaker* (Phila., 1827), vol. i. pp. 114, 115.
[2] See *The Quaker*, vol. i. p. 147.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 172, 173.

capricious, and that He deserted them in their hour of need, for no reason whatever. The times of "stripping," when they sat as "on the barren mountains of Gilboa, with neither rain nor dew, nor fields of offering," to use their common phrase, must be part of a great divine purpose. It might be, so they fondly believed, that these people before them needed the discipline of silence. They had come perhaps to depend too much on *words*. They were turned too strongly to the outward, and were looking for entertainment from the visitor, when they ought rather to be sweeping and garnishing their inward house, and doing the personal work which brings the divine blessing. God would "starve them from words" and drive them home to themselves.[1]

But this explanation of what they called "drought and famine" of words hardly seemed adequate to account for the phenomenon. If the people needed to be "starved from words" why should a prophetic messenger be sent? In many of the meetings of the period silence was the usual procedure—words were the rare exception. The starving process was almost continuous, and it would seem that when a distant visitor came among the people of such a meeting a spiritual "feast" was in order—rather than an intenser stage of "starving." The other explanation—the second conclusion—brings us to the interesting trait of Quietism called "travailing with the suffering seed."

By this they meant that they were called to sit in silence with a meeting until they had worked their way down, or in their own language had "centered down,"

[1] John Churchman gives a good case of this kind during his visit in England: "In the meantime I carefully visited all the meetings, in great awfulness, being bowed in spirit under a sense of a forward ministry, and sat chiefly in silence among them" (*Journal*, p. 127).

Catharine Phillips says: "I heard there was a great desire to hear me speak in this place; but the Lord was pleased very much to disappoint their expectation" (*Life*, p. 218).

John Pemberton makes the following report of his visit at Ballynakill, Ireland: "Little was said to them, their expectations being outward. They were plainly told thereof, and advised not to neglect their own duty and set their eyes on man, but to retire unto Him who alone can afford true satisfaction; and then they would be better prepared to receive help through instruments" (*Life and Travels of John Pemberton*, p. 21).

where they could feel out and discover "the state and condition" of the meeting, or of individuals in the meeting, and then they believed that in the silence they could travail in birth pains for the suffering seed, and, through divine assistance, raise it into life and power and victory precisely as Madame Guyon believed that by "a divine fecundity" she could in silence do the suffering work of "spiritual maternity" for her friends. In this operation she first felt the actual state of soul of the person with whom she was in filiation and then she endured the redemptive suffering which attached to that "state."[1] Something quite like this work fell upon the most sensitive, intense and prophetic of the Ministers who went out to rebuild the waste places. Sarah (Tuke) Grubb, who was an extraordinarily sensitive soul and fundamentally mystical in her temperament, gives in her *Journal* a great many accounts of this painful process. She describes an occasion of this kind in the very beginning of her ministry, when she was learning to "submit to the turnings of the divine Hand."

[1] "I became aware," Madame Guyon writes, "of a gift of God, which had been communicated to me without my understanding it, namely, the discernment of spirits and the giving to each what was suitable for him. I felt myself suddenly clothed with an apostolic state, and I discerned the state of the souls of the persons who spoke to me, and that with such facility that they were astonished and said one to the other that I gave to each that of which he had need. . . . I felt that what I said came from the fountain-head, and that I was merely the instrument of Him who made me speak." (*Autobiography* II., chap. xvii.) In her own graphic phrases, she was endowed with "spiritual fecundity," "spiritual maternity." "I was," she says, with extraordinary boldness, "a participator in all the divine mysteries and I was associated in divine maternity in Jesus Christ. It was this maternity which caused me most suffering, for," she explains, "I can bring forth spiritual children only on the cross." She seemed, in this work of spiritual maternity, to be aware of all the inner conditions of her spiritual children, to be travailing in pain for their birth, and to be enduring all the purgatorial sufferings attaching to their sin or their unfaithfulness, and on occasions it seemed to her as though she was brought into such depths of divine experience that she became a channel, or "canal," through which divine grace, or the fountain of living water, flowed into the souls of those for whom she was travailing, so that "they experienced in themselves an inconceivable plenitude of grace and a greater gift of prayer." This "greater gift of prayer" seemed to her the supreme mark of spiritual attainment, and above all other callings she felt divinely called to the mission of perfecting persons to pray in silence and to receive grace without the mediation of speech or thought. As the soul advances to this highest state, it is able, she declares, to remain in absolute silence before God, while the Word of God operates in the central depth by ineffable speech above all articulation. True prayer is thus a divinely initiated prayer, a prayer which God moves and directs in the soul.

"In Penrith," she says, "we had two Suffering Meetings; in both of which I felt a greater unwillingness to submit to a necessary wading of spirit, than I can describe; for really, the spring of life requires much digging for, in places where the substance of religion is departed from, and only the image retained. In this exercise, I frequently felt ready to faint, and always engage in it with great dread." [1]

A few days later, in another meeting, she had the same hard "dispensation" to bear:

It has been hard for me to have my mind bent under any degree of that weight and suffering which are generally necessary to feel, before the spring is found to be opened, or any *circulation of divine life* experienced.[2]

"I am abundantly convinced," again she says, "that they who are sent out in this day, to a people who have, in a great measure, forsaken both law and testimony, and what is still worse, see not their states, but are secure in themselves, have not to eat much pleasant bread: for I think I may say, it hath often been our lot to go bowed down all the day long, and to mourn in a deep sense the great desolation which overspreads the Society."

We find ourselves after the meeting to-day, in a very gloomy situation of mind; as it was a suffering time, and we thought left us with sentence of death in ourselves; perhaps that we may not trust in ourselves.[3]

A little later she remarks of a meeting: "we had to suffer with the seed in this place." [4]

Sarah (Lynes) Grubb, one of the most powerful woman preachers of her time, and a person whose remarkable psychical disposition marked her life with many unusual experiences, also took her part in this painful silent work of opening the clogged and hidden channels where the streams of life were meant to flow. Writing of her work in Ireland she says:

The meetings here have been times of very deep digging; the spring of life lies low, and that of the ministry in unison with it; but through a great deal of labour, the power made its own way, even into some dominion, in each meeting.[5]

No one of the Quaker leaders appears to have been led through greater depths of sufferings for "the seed" than

[1] *Life and Labours*, p. 17. [2] *Ibid.* p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 27 and 31. [4] *Ibid.* p. 48. [5] *Letters*, p. 207.

Job Scott, the Rhode Island mystic. His years of ministry were almost continuously a "laborious travail in the deeps" that "the spring of life might arise."[1] He believed himself to be called to pass through the experiences which Christ went through in the period of His historical life and passion, and he further believed, as Madame Guyon did, that what he suffered and endured, under the impression of "states and conditions" of individuals or of the Church, would be mysteriously efficacious, as travail for their spiritual birth.

"I was at Caroline meeting [Virginia]," he writes, "and sat in silence. It was more painful and distressing than any I had been at in this journey before. I remembered the account of Christ's agony, his sweating as it were drops of blood, and crying out to his heavenly Father, 'My God! why hast thou forsaken me?' I saw the propriety of his passing through this trying scene, and I believed it necessary for me to go through that portion of sufferings assigned me."[2]

On a later visit through the meetings of Virginia he was so impressed with the "states" of some persons who were present that he felt compelled to sit down and break off the sermon which he was preaching, until "Truth triumphed" and "the spring of life arose" in the meeting. The passage is an interesting one:

On first-day, the 20th, I attended the meeting at Fairfax; I sat long in suffering silence; but at length, standing up, got forward with much difficulty; such mountains of obstruction lying in my way, arising from the states of some present, as I believed, that I seemed not enabled to get along far before I found it best to sit down, rather abruptly; and sitting quiet and still in mind, although I doubt not many present thought me a fool, yet I felt resigned to endure their ridicule. But after sitting a good while, and finding I could not leave the place easy, I rose . . . finding my mind gradually and unexpectedly opened and enlarged, until truth reigned over all. I obtained at length a great degree of relief to my mind; the meeting held four hours, and ended abundantly more to my own satisfaction, and that of some others, than I had expected.[3]

He reports another impressive case of spiritual travail

[1] *Journal*, p. 217. [2] *Ibid.* p. 281. [3] *Ibid.* p. 345.

in silence in his account of a journey through the meetings in the State of New York in 1784:

Next day we were at a meeting called the Upper Meeting; a painful, mournful, and distressing meeting, but, after deep travail, we were assisted, and enabled to sound an alarm among them in a degree of Gospel authority, and, though I believe we felt truth and the seed of life under oppression; yet as we lay low with it, and were made willing to suffer with it, we were enabled to witness it to reign in dominion over all.[1]

During his visit to Ireland, where he finally laid down his life, he suffered so deeply in spirit and travailed so painfully for the liberation of "the oppressed seed" that his body sympathetically revealed the effect of the agony. I will let him tell it in his own words:

This morning when I awoke, I felt in my body as if I had been all over bruised, such had been my extreme agony of soul yesterday, and such is the sympathy between soul and body. Some may scarce believe me; but there is one who knows I lie not. I read, and then walked out a while. The sun shone pleasantly, the birds sang, and the whole face of nature was beautiful; but my soul remembered the gall and the wormwood, and I seemed forbidden to take much satisfaction in any thing visible. O my God! thou art weaning me still more and more, and much more than I once thought necessary, from the world, and from all that is in it.[2]

William Williams (1763–1824), who was born in North Carolina and joined the pioneer movement to carry Quakerism westward, shows in his *Journal* a strong tendency toward Quietism. He always waited for God to settle for him both what he should say and when he should say it, "for," he says, "*of ourselves we can do nothing to profit.*" The following passage out of his experience is a good illustration of the quietistic manner:

At one of these little meetings the power of the Lord on me was so great that I could hardly sit still;[3] and I again felt the word of command to fall down on my knees and supplicate the

[1] *Journal*, p. 163.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 451. Sarah (Lynes) Grubb reports a similar experience. See her *Letters*, p. 84.

[3] "These little meetings" were held in Tennessee.

Most High. But I let in the reasoner again, and reasoned until meeting broke; and then, O! the horror that I felt. And for many days it appeared that all goodness was withdrawn from me. O! then, how did I desire to feel one moment's presence of my Master, but could not. Then did I often retire to lonely places, and try to call on the name of the Lord my God, but could not find a word to utter before Him. Then did I again covenant, that if He would be pleased to appear again to my distressed soul, let Him require what He would, I would obey His command. But it was some time before He was pleased to show me His face again, so that my will was for the present fully brought down, and self laid low in the dust, when I was made willing, through His strength, to do His will, and what He might be pleased to require of me. And when the Lord of Glory knew that I was fully humbled, He again appeared with the incomes of His precious love to my poor soul, and overshadowed me with His everlasting arm of strength, in such a manner that the whole man was made to bow before Him in awful solemn silence, and in this state, in quietly waiting to know His will, I felt the word of command, and strength again given to supplicate in a few words. It was an awful solemn time, and many sincere hearted friends were much affected, and broken into tears. This was at Lost Creek Meeting, on first day, the 28th of the 9th month, in the year of our Lord 1800.

O! the joy and sweet consolation I felt, and my soul could praise the Lord my God, as I rode to my habitation—and for many days and weeks I felt His love to flow into my heart, and was often ready to conclude that my services in that line were over, and that it would not be any more required of me; for I attended many meetings, feeling His love to fill my heart, but felt not the word of command for some time:—but as I was sitting in meeting with my mind much gathered and stayed on the Lord, I felt His power to overshadow me in a remarkable manner, and a scripture text was brought to my remembrance, which I believed I was required to relate, with a few words of exhortation.[1]

These passages, which might be multiplied many fold from the Quaker writings of the period, are sufficient to indicate the point upon which I am dwelling, namely, that those who embodied most completely the Quaker ideals in the eighteenth century believed, as the quietists of Italy and France had believed a century earlier, that they could

[1] *Journal* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1828; reprinted in Dublin, 1839), Dublin ed. p. 5.

receive impressions from God to suffer silently in spirit, and that by divine grace this suffering could work effects in the hidden lives of others.

There are many evidences in these eighteenth-century Journals that the public Friends of the period were characteristically of the psychical, ecstatic type. They were for the most part solid, well-balanced persons, but they were at the same time persons who were predisposed to "invasions," to inward impulses whose origin they could not trace, and they were persons, too, who easily dropped into telepathic rapport with the groups in which they sat. It was no uncommon feat for these itinerant messengers to sit absolutely unmoved for hours and to be withdrawn not only from action but from concrete thinking as well, and still to be intensely alive and concentrated. It needs hardly to be said that most normal persons are incapable of this! The mind, as we know too well, flies away from the mental task before it and is brought back only to shy off again on another tangent. To concentrate in this absorbed and distracted fashion in itself calls for a peculiar psychical type, and such in fact were many of these Ministers. And with that trait of mind and disposition, we know not how or why, goes also the telepathic power—the power to feel out states and conditions and unuttered desires in persons far or near. Some of the extraordinary successes which these Ministers thought they made in uncovering the minds of those to whom they spoke may be unconsciously coloured in the telling, but there can be no doubt at all that they sometimes made surprising revelations, and they apparently did do a real work in these speechless ministrations, which they called "travailing with the suffering seed."

The quietistic temper tended among Friends, as has happened wherever that temper has been strongly in evidence, to exalt the marvellous and to emphasize the sphere of the supernatural. The Journals are for the most part sober, restrained narratives. The writers are almost always modest, humble-minded persons who also had a remarkably delicate sense for truth, so that one

will look in vain here for oriental flights of imagination or for medieval luxury of saintly incidents. But nevertheless there is a pretty steady focus of attention on the supernatural. The things of most real importance to these men and women were events and "happenings" (though they never allowed that word) that could not be explained by any known processes. Ideas which "came" without any strain or effort of ratiocination, feelings and insights which burst upon them as unexpectedly as the "cape of cloud from the invisible air," fields of labour which were "laid upon" them when the creaturely will was silent, seemed to them to belong in a different order of things from the ideas and feelings and proposals which could be accounted for in normal processes of experience. The ability to feel out "states," to diagnose inward situations, to tell what was passing in somebody's mind, to read as in an open book the "condition" of individuals and meetings, were achievements attended with all the mystery of the direct finger of God; and the importance of this "gift," as has generally been the case with quietists, was made unduly great. They lived continually in the expectation of *providential* guidances and deliverances. The mist which saves their ship from pirates is a "providential mist"; the delay of a coach which enabled them to make connections and hold a meeting is a "providential delay"; the arrival of a letter which throws light on some perplexity of plan is a "providential event." A Friend feels, for instance, that one room in an inn is unsuitable and finds it impossible to feel "easy" until it is changed. Sitting in the room to which he has changed he observes a passer-by who impresses him, follows him and finds an opening for service. The entire concatenation seems a series of "providential arrangements" of a supernatural order. The Journals abound in incidents of this sort or of similar type, and there can be no question that the itinerant Ministers lived in a *climate of expectations* of supernatural help.

As always happens when the quietistic attitude makes wide conquest, the Friends of this type continually

exhibited a fear of intellect and tended to narrow the sphere of reason. At first they insisted, as we have seen, that prayer and ministry must be oracular, that is to say, must be the result of an immediate "moving," the pure jet of a divine spring of life, but as the quietistic temper of mind progressed, it became not at all unusual for members of the Society to expect all important matters to be settled by heavenly openings. The affairs of meetings for business were transacted on this basis. Nothing, or at most as little as possible, was matured or prepared in advance. All subjects were approached in a frame of silence, and those who "spoke to business" were expected to speak "under guidance" and not "under the will or wisdom of the creature." At the close of a discourse delivered in an important crisis in London Yearly Meeting the speaker said: "I brought nothing with me into this meeting [*i.e.* no thought-out ideas] for I remembered our Saviour's command to His disciples, not to take thought how they might speak."[1]

This timidity toward reason, or creature-will, was, in the case of many Friends, carried out even to the matters of daily life and the decisions of practical affairs. It was not uncommon, as has already appeared, for a Quaker to receive an "opening," pointing him to the person who was to be the companion of his life. John Woolman is one among many to whom "the Lord gave wisdom to proceed agreeably to His will" in this "serious business,"[2] or, as Sarah Grubb calls it, "awful business" of marriage. Occupations for life were revealed to many. The place of residence was again and again pointed out to the faithful. Sarah (Lynes) Grubb, for example, felt *impelled* to move from her happy and attractive home in Ireland to an English locality which seemed distinctly pointed out to her. How minutely the matters of life, of travel, and of philanthropic activity might be believed by a sensitive soul to be *ordered* comes clearly to light in the *Journal* of the Quietist-Quaker, Thomas Shillitoe. In all

[1] *Letters* of Sarah (Lynes) Grubb, p. 336.
[2] Woolman's *Journal*, p. 78.

his extensive travels, he steered his course and shaped his plans almost entirely by sudden *openings* and mysterious *movings* within. During his remarkable religious visit in the islands of Jersey and Guernsey in 1802, on landing from the boat in Jersey, he felt a moving to stop at a certain house, as they were passing, "with a prospect of apprehended duty" to some one there. His companion manifested "some alarm," and told him that "great folks" lived there, who would be offended at the visit of a Quaker. Thomas, however, could not shake his feeling, and being convinced that divine help would be near if he obeyed, he entered and found "a serious young woman," who needed his message, gave him a courteous hearing, and was very affectionate at the parting.[1]

Similar concrete openings and definite leadings abound in his accounts of his extraordinary travels on foot in nearly all parts of England and Ireland where any Friends lived. As he was sitting in a "select meeting" in Waterford, Ireland, his "mind was made sensible" that he ought to pay a religious visit to the drinking-houses of the city and suburbs, which was the beginning of one of the most remarkable services of his life. As he proceeded in this hard line of duty, going to each drinking-house of the city, securing a time of silence, giving a religious message, as the Lord opened the way, both to bar-tenders and frequenters, and urging a life of righteousness and temperance, he felt the prospect of duty widen out, and before he was relieved of the burden he visited nearly all the drinking-houses of Ireland within reach of any Quaker centres, visiting as many sometimes as thirty-five in a day. He was often in grave danger both from the rabble and from the proprietors. He found himself in great straits in hundreds of places. He was "called" to interview many Roman Catholic priests and bishops to urge upon them better care of their flock, and to visit many magistrates and persons in authority to secure better conditions of moral and social life. This shrinking,

[1] Shillitoe's *Journal*, vol. i. p. 28.

timorous man, afraid almost of his own shadow, palpitating with fear at the least indication of moving ahead of his Guide, in the line of this opening of duty went through experiences that would have cowed the battle-scarred soldier. One illustration will suffice:

> At one place when I was requesting the woman of the house to give us her company, a big dirty-looking man, who was taking his pint of beer at the bar, after filling his mouth with the beer squirted it in my face and bosom, telling me to take that for Jesus Christ's sake, declaring he would go for the poker, and left us as if he was determined to put his threats into practice; but his threats did not discourage me, feeling the assurance he would not be permitted to hurt a hair of my head.[1]

In 1812, by what seemed to him a series of divine guidances, he was led to join with a Quaker woman named Ann Fry in carrying through a religious visit to the families of the colliers and miners in the neighbourhood of Kingswood, including a great band of outlaws in that region known as the "Gang." In this arduous and often dangerous work he was deeply affected by the human misery he met; especially among the aged sick and the infant poor. The ministry of love and fellowship, the words of grace and tenderness, the messages of divine favour and pity toward all men, touched all classes and conditions, and once more, as in the days of Whitefield, tears made streaks down the faces of these long-neglected toilers and these sin-hardened men and women of the outlaw "gang." The visit was like a relief boat to shipwrecked men on rafts. Here is the comment which Thomas makes:

> Notwithstanding the depraved countenances of some with whom we have sat, the rough and uncultivated manner in which they at first received us, and the unwillingness they manifested to attend to our entreaties, it rarely occurred but that at our parting some evident proofs have been manifested of a sensibility on their part of the need there was for them to be in good earnest about their immortal souls.[2]

Even more extraordinary, if possible, was his service

[1] *Journal*, vol. i. p. 132. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 168.

in the families of the persons who took part in the labour-war against the introduction of machinery in Yorkshire in 1812. Seventeen of the leaders were executed and one was transported for participation in the riots. Thomas Shillitoe's primary service was to the families that had been left widowed and fatherless by these executions, and where possible to visit the condemned men themselves. He found most heartrending situations, and "ability was afforded him," to use his humble words, to bring these distressed souls into quiet and submission, to make them feel the abiding reality of God's love and the existence of human goodness and to help them to start living again.

His mission on the continent of Europe began in 1821. He started forth on his journey almost entirely devoid of plan, like Abraham, not knowing whither he would go. He was so deeply conscious that he was on a divine "embassy," that he did not feel free to visit any picture galleries, or to "indulge his curiosity in the vanities and follies" of art. Each event and each movement of this strange visit, and of his still stranger subsequent visit to Russia, was undertaken in response to what seemed to him a divine *direction*, and he was literally like the cork blown on the ocean.

His first concrete task was unexpectedly laid upon him in the call to bring about a reform in the loose manner of observing the First day of the week in the cities of Hamburg and Altona, a task which caused him an immense amount of bitter suffering, long wearisome delays, and a brief imprisonment. He was *impressed* with the command to walk the streets of these cities and observe their "wicked practices," and then through "adorable mercy" he was given a message from the Lord to the inhabitants. It took weeks of anxious waiting to get his messages translated and printed, and finally grave difficulties had to be surmounted before they could be placed in the hands of the magistrates and citizens, but each step seemed to him to be arranged for him, and his main endeavour was the attainment of "a state of nothingness of self." He sensibly felt, he says, the

necessity of having the Lord's instrument free from all creaturely will and wisdom, like a clean tube through which the liquid passes without obstruction.[1]

At a meeting in Stavanger, while he was in Norway, he was impressed that he must not ask to have his message interpreted. It seemed (reasoning after the manner of men) absurd to address a large meeting in an unknown tongue, but, he records, "Truth so wrought" on the mind of one woman who understood no English, that she wept aloud, and tears were streaming down many faces.[2]

In Geneva he was inwardly prompted to change his room in the hotel, and he declined three rooms until he was brought to one, about which his mind felt "easy." In Lyons, he was directed to alter his course as he was walking the street, and so came upon English Friends travelling in the ministry. In fact he had so many divine promptings and providential interpositions that he had "a stop in his mind" about retelling these occurrences, for fear that they might "promote the creature." He felt that the only safe place was to "sit with his mouth in the dust," and dedicate himself anew to his Heavenly Father.

During his second visit to the continent, undertaken with a clear presentiment that he was for some unknown reason to pass the winter in St. Petersburg, he found himself on the way directed to visit the King of Prussia. There was no visible way of securing an audience. He was suddenly impressed that he should sit down quietly in his hotel and read over a list which had been given him of "serious persons" in Berlin, to see if his mind would be particularly directed to one name above another. As the list was read he felt his "mind in a particular manner bound in spirit to an individual" in the list, and, after many exercises of faith and patience, he was enabled, through the help of this man, to accomplish "what appeared to be in the divine mind and will" for him in connection with the King and the royal family.

A further service was laid upon him in Prussia to carry

[1] *Journal*, vol. i. p. 314. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 357.

a message of divine love to the prisoners in the great prison at Spandau. As a preparation for this excessively difficult service, he asked the Lord to "empty and strip" him, and then to "fill the vessel of his mind at the needful time." As he finished his message in the prison, many of the prisoners were "bathed in tears" and seemed wonderfully "brought into subjection to the power of God." Before leaving them, Thomas was moved to give each of the prisoners "a hand of love," and their handshakes and tendered countenances showed that he had reached their hearts. Another incident in his preparation for the visit to the prison finely reveals his two diverse types of timidity—his native fear of danger and his greater fear of disobeying his inner Guide:

> I had concluded, in the course of the night previous to our proceeding to Spandau, to empty my pockets of my money, watch, pocket-book, and my penknife more particularly; for, by having my penknife about me, I might be the cause of furnishing them with the means of my own destruction: this I accordingly did. But on mature deliberation on the step I had thus taken, I was mercifully led to see, that it was the effect of that departure from a full and entire reliance on God's arm of power, which the enemy was endeavouring to bring about in my mind. I sensibly felt the performance of this very act had produced weakness, causing the hands that had been made strong, through the power of the mighty God of Jacob, rather to fall again. I therefore returned to my chamber, and replaced each of these articles as they were before, taking particular care that my penknife was not left behind.[1]

When he reached Copenhagen, he set about getting his passport for his journey to Russia, but, no sooner had he secured it, than he discovered that he did not have his "divine Master's passport" to proceed, and a warning voice arose within him: "Go not out by haste or by flight, but fulfil the whole of thy appointed time." "This I found," he says, "must be attended to, if I were to secure a safe guidance back again to my native land." Much service thereupon opened for him, both in the palace and in the prison. Finally he came to his destination in

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 46.

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Russia, though his orders were still sealed, and he had trying seasons when Satan tempted him to "ruminate" on the uselessness of his trip. At length, by a concatenated series of *leadings* and "secret plungings," he found himself impressed to visit the Czar, Alexander I., and was favoured to have two very extraordinary religious sittings in the palace, where his mind was "unshackled" and he "unbosomed his whole soul" to the great Emperor, who talked with him as friend with friend and declared: "I bless the Lord that He continues to send His gospel ministers to keep me in remembrance of His merciful awakening to my soul."[1]

There can be no question that men like Job Scott and Thomas Shillitoe, and women like the two Sarah Grubbs and Mary Dudley did much to bring depth to the spiritual life of the Society. But they, and the host of their fellow-Ministers, who gave direction to this profound current of quietistic temper and sentiment, gradually shifted the Quaker emphasis. Quakerism was no doubt always concerned with the state and condition of the inner life; it was, as William James once called it, "a religion of veracity rooted in *spiritual inwardness*,"[2] but primitive Quakerism was deeply penetrated with the consciousness of world-mission. Its early leaders were more essentially outward-looking than inward-looking. Having discovered once for all that the seat and centre of religion was in the soul of man, they set their faces to the task of bringing the world under the power of this Principle. They never thought of themselves as a Society existing for the quiet cultivation of the interior life; they thought of themselves rather as the first fruits of the true apostolic Church, which through their faithful and valiant labours was to grow and expand and make conquest of the world until in it Christ should triumph and be Head over all. They formed, according to their own belief, a "seed"—a living seed of God—which some day was to be the ripe, full-formed, true, apostolic Church, and they focussed and centred on the immense task of building *that* Church.

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 102. [2] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 6.

The itinerant Ministers of this later period, on the other hand, were fundamentally concerned with the task of perfecting "a peculiar people." They no longer had the robust optimistic faith of the first "pillar" Friends that this "seed of God," this Society of theirs, was destined to "reign" and become the universal Church. They were content with a much more humble mission—the perfecting of a select and chosen body, or Society, composed of persons who would be faithful to their inner Light, who would be sensitive to divine requirings of duty, who would be ready to go through all the processes of baptism and anointing that are necessary for the formation of a holy inward life, and who would take up the cross, separate themselves from the world and become "peculiar" in the eyes of the world and of Christendom, while in their own eyes they were to be "peculiar" in the sense of being *God's very own.*

The quietistic ideals, as they were gradually developed by the spiritual leaders in England and America, dwelt, as we have seen, upon withdrawal from contact with the world and from responsibility for shaping the affairs of men and of nations—withdrawal even from an interest in politics. The conquests which best fitted these ideals of Quietism were conquests of the inner spirit. The world confronted them, stubborn and unmalleable. It seemed to be a realm of darkness and hostility to spiritual aims. Their business, as it appeared to them, was to bring every power of heart and mind and will into obedience to the Light of Christ which shined in their souls, to build an inner Kingdom where Christ might absolutely reign, and to this conquest they devoted all their energies.

Silence as a supreme method of inward discipline and of spiritual culture was another ideal of this quietistic temper. "*Be still and know*" were the most frequent words heard in their meetings. In this hush and silence of all flesh, it was believed that "the very life and motion of the divine Spirit" could be palpably known in the soul and the "*operation of Truth*" could be unmistakably realized. Another ideal which steadily gained sway over

the minds of Friends was the purpose to have all spiritual *exercises* partake of the supernatural. The contrast between "the creature" and the Spirit became almost absolute, the dualism of human and divine became almost complete. The "worm of the dust" conception of man is everywhere powerfully in evidence in the Journals of the later eighteenth century. There is nothing in man, they all say, which can be brought to God except the silence and quiescence of the creature. Man must go out before God can come in, and all that can be called "spiritually effective," or "savoury," to use the quietistic phrase, is what is initiated by divine motion and carried through by a direct act of the Spirit.

The London Epistle of 1745 exhorts Friends everywhere to "wait diligently on the Lord," "that you may witness His Holy Spirit to influence and direct you *in all your words and actions*: and as you attend with a single eye to its holy and unerring directions, you will be preserved from looking outward and having your expectation from abroad."[1] The annual message of 1748 urges Friends to "wait in awful silence for the manifestations of the divine Life . . . not having your eye to man, but fixing your expectation on the Lord alone.[2] Again, in 1755, the "dear brethren" are exhorted to "retire inwardly in great humility of mind and self-abasement."[3] This ideal as the condition for the cultivation of a spiritual body permeates the documents of London Yearly Meeting year after year and is strongly pressed to the attention of the world-wide fellowship in 1789:

> Wait in humble reverence for spiritual ability to worship acceptably the Lord of heaven and earth. Wait humbly and diligently in the spirit of your minds for the (inward) coming of Him who told His disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing"; that ye may happily experience the influence of His Spirit to enlighten and quicken the soul to a true sight and sense of its condition; that feeling the spirit of supplication ye may approach the throne of grace.[4]

[1] *Epistles from the Y.M. of Friends held in London* (London, 1858), vol. i. p. 251.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 258. [3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 293. [4] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 76.

Not only in the Journals of the spiritual pillars but in the deliberations of the rank and file of the membership, wherever we can get sight of them, the quietistic ideals are in the foreground and have a controlling influence. The Quietism of these Quaker ideals is not an exact copy of the Quietism of the continental experts. It was never a conscious imitation or the following of external teachers. It was a normal maturing and unfolding of a central religious principle—common both to Quakers and to quietists—with a later intensification of the quietistic tendency under the influence of religious leaders who were deeply impressed by the discovery of the writings of men and women outside their Society. Without "observation" and without conscious awareness of the shift of direction, the Society of Friends found itself at the end of the eighteenth century a body penetrated and possessed with the ideals of Quietism.

## CHAPTER IV

### GROWTH OF ORGANIZATION AND DISCIPLINE OF FRIENDS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In 1725 the men who had been the founders and pillars of the Quaker Society had all gone to their eternal rest. The creative period was over and tendencies toward rigidity and crystallization were already strongly in evidence. The groups of mystically inclined sectaries, fervently seeking a religion of interior depth and of apostolic simplicity, which had been very numerous at the time of the birth of the Quaker movement, had now either been absorbed into the Society which Fox had founded, or had been slowly obliterated by the normal course of history and by the pressure of the dominant ecclesiastical forces. There were no more opportunities for sudden growth and expansion such as marked the first period both in England and in America. The Society had accumulated into itself all it could expect to accumulate from the slowly ripened spiritual harvest of the preceding centuries. There were now no intense and dynamic groups waiting only for a spark to fall upon them to kindle them with a fire of religious fervour and to sweep them in a body into the growing flock of "the Children of Light." The question was henceforth to be settled whether the Society, that had in seventy-five years in the face of terrific persecution gathered more than fifty thousand members in Great Britain, and had made itself a weighty factor in all the American Colonies, could develop its inward unity and its organising power, and could now discover new methods of expansion and

continue to accumulate in fresh ways an enlarging membership from the world around it. This test was to prove a harder and more searching one than the test of persecution in the first period, and the answer to the question cannot be altogether affirmative, though in America the period of growth and expansion lasted longer than in England. It is a notable fact that the Society continued to grow in numbers in America throughout the eighteenth century. It also produced in America a large number of influential Ministers whose itinerant labours did much to upbuild and strengthen Quakerism during its "lean years" in England.

The date at which this volume opens is in some sense artificial. The year 1725 is not an epoch-date in the history of England. It is, however, a point as well defined as any that can be chosen, to mark the end of primitive Quakerism and the beginning of its later history. All the "founders" were now dead and the central aspirations of the new leaders had altered profoundly. For a hundred years from the date chosen for the beginning of this volume, the history of Quakerism was in the main the uneventful story of internal spiritual processes. There were occasional bursts of missionary enthusiasm and there was, in America, a pioneer spirit that carried Quakerism west with the march of population, but in general the Society was occupied with the maturing of its own inner life and the realization of its ideal for itself. That ideal was in 1725 no longer world embracing. Its leaders, as we have seen, had ceased to cherish the optimistic vision of the founders that the Quaker Society was eventually to become the apostolic *Church*, drawing into itself the whole family of God.[1] Instead of devoting themselves to this ambitious programme, the new leaders were adjusting themselves to another task: that of perfecting a spiritual remnant—a little Zion, a "peculiar people," set apart, hedged

[1] "In 1658 there was not a Quaker living who did not believe Quakerism to be the one true Church of the living God. In 1858 there is not a Quaker living who does believe it." Hancock's *Peculium*, p. 21.

around, but inwardly beautiful and glorious and the Lord's *very own*. This was no doubt a less thrilling and dramatic mission, but its story possesses genuine significance in modern religious history, and it will furnish lessons of real and permanent value. The most important part of our study of the inner movement will be an investigation of the spiritual ideals which gradually became differentiated and which formed the "message" of the Society, but "customs" and "habits" always hold an important place in the formation of "peculiar peoples" and tend to become sacred, and these aspects will call for some attention in the early part of this present history.

The original form of organization, as it slowly grew into shape during the molten period of the Quaker movement, was an adaptation of methods and practices which had been tried, tested, and sifted in the numerous groups and societies which had been attempting, ever since Luther's day, the tasks of spiritual reformation and of building an apostolic Church. While the founders of Quakerism themselves lived, personalities counted for more than systems and creative leadership prevented rigid crystallization, but this later stage, of smaller personalities and of waning enthusiasm, was naturally destined to be an era that would perfect the inherited system of organization and discipline and expand and magnify the accumulated customs of the fathers.

During the entire formative stage there were no clearly defined rules for membership in the Society. Persons who had been "convinced of Truth," who duly attended meetings for worship, and who professed with Friends were considered to belong to the Society. The privilege of attendance at the business meetings was not in the early period an inherent right of those who belonged in the fellowship, but was dependent upon invitation from persons of weight and authority. In other words, the Monthly Meeting was "select." Lists of persons entitled to transact the business of the Church were kept by Monthly Meetings, and these persons composed the working "fellowship of Truth," while around them gathered

a large fringe of persons who attended meetings and "professed with Friends," though they were not felt to be quite "seasoned in the Truth" and thus there was in practice a "select society" within the Society. In the meetings of the London district, the selected group which composed the Monthly Meeting usually included women, though in other sections of the Society it was customary for the women to meet separately. In a report of London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting to London Yearly Meeting in 1755 the statement is made that Southwark Monthly Meeting has no women's meeting, "nor ever had": "but their women Friends sit with their men in their Monthly Meetings and are jointly concerned in carrying on the business thereof."[1] This appears to have been frequent policy and practice. Westminster Monthly Meeting in 1749, on the advice of the Quarterly Meeting, invited "certain women Friends" to attend its meetings.[2] This was not, however, the inauguration of the custom, but only a revival of an old custom. The Quarterly Meeting report, referred to above, says:

> In these meetings [the Monthly Meetings] the men and women met together . . . but there being of late years a pretty good declension in the attendance of the women Friends, it became our concern, in the year 1749, to stir up the women Friends, to the continuance and support of such their ancient right and commendable practice, which had some good effects for a time, but has since dwindled and in some Monthly Meetings [is] not in practice.

Soon after the middle of the century there was an effort made to establish separate meetings for the women in all Monthly Meetings in Great Britain, a custom which had long prevailed in American Meetings. The Yearly Meeting in 1756 reports that there is still a "deficiency of women's meetings in sundry counties" and Friends are strongly urged to establish women's meetings wherever they are lacking. The minute says:

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[1] See Wm. Beck and T. F. Ball, *The London Friends Meetings* (London, 1869), p. 235. See also *Second Period*, p. 274.

[2] *London Friends Meetings*, p. 254.

As it appears Such Meetings (where they are held) have been of great Service to the Society in general, and to the Youth in particular: It is our earnest Desire, that Our Sisters in the Truth, whom Providence hath endowed with Spiritual Gifts, may come up to the help of their Brethren in the discipline of the Church.[1]

While the custom was in vogue of having the Monthly Meeting a "select" body, it was in places the practice to hold a special Monthly Meeting every three months, often called a "General Monthly Meeting," to which all members, including children and servants, were invited. On these occasions "seasonable exhortations and suitable advices" were read, and the attenders were encouraged to stand and grow "in the blessed truth." Out of this practice grew up the custom of holding "Youths' Meetings" in connection with the Quarterly Meetings.

The custom, which Friends inaugurated from the very first, of providing for the maintenance of poor members eventually compelled the Society to scrutinize with considerable care the lists of those who claimed its privileges, and this scrutiny led finally to a more definite differentiation of membership. A minute of London Yearly Meeting for the year 1737, dealing with "Removals and Settlements," first clearly defined membership and for the first time also settled positively the question of "birthright" membership. The minute reads as follows:

> All Friends shall be deemed members of the Quarterly, Monthly, or Two-Weeks Meeting, within the compass of which they inhabited or dwelt the 1st day of the Fourth Month [June] 1737: . . . and the wife and children to be deemed members of the Monthly Meeting of which the husband or father is a member, not only during his life, but after his decease, until they shall gain another Settlement elsewhere.[2]

This minute, which was very carefully drawn up, and was

[1] *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. xi. p. 357.

[2] *London Y.M. Minutes*, vol. viii. pp. 314-319. The "Two Weeks Meeting" referred to in the extract was often called "Fortnightly Meeting." It was a meeting which had especial charge over marriages among Friends within the compass of the London Monthly Meetings. It was discontinued by its own action in 1789. There were Two Weeks Meetings in some other places, but these had the full functions of Monthly Meetings though held every two weeks.

approved "after being several times read over," deals with the details of procedure when a Friend, or a Friend's family wishes to remove from the "limits" of one Monthly Meeting and settle in the "compass" of another one; with the care of poor Friends who may "fall into want"—often called "necessitous Friends"—and with the steps to be taken to make "enquiry as to clearness respecting marriage." It was not intended at this time to inaugurate a new basis of birthright membership and this minute only made explicit a course of action which had slowly grown into unreflective practice, but it was nevertheless a decision big with consequences for the future of the Society. What the action in its unfolding consequences meant was that henceforth the mere fact of birth constituted a child of Quaker parents a Friend, that the Society was to be recruited in numbers mainly by increments of birthright members, and that, in the normal course of things, it was bound to have a large proportion of nominal and traditional members, who belonged to it for the mere reason that they were born into it and statically stayed there.

It had been a fundamental idea of all the spiritual groups from which the Society of Friends was gathered —including, of course, the Anabaptists—that the living Church of Christ is a Church of *believers and possessors*. Their constant criticism of what they called the "apostate church" was that it was a "mixed" body, made up of believers and unbelievers, of persons who had received a true inward change of nature and of persons who lived according to the flesh. They insisted upon a root and branch reformation and upon the formation of a winnowed apostolic Church, which should be a society of new-born, revivified persons—"without spot or blemish"—and that nobody should be in it who was not there by the conscious act of his own faith. This was a vital idea with George Fox, and it was the basis of membership in all meetings for business affairs in the primitive days. "All the faithful men and women in every country and city and nation, whose faith stands in the power of God, the Gospel of Christ, and have received the Gospel and

are in *possession* of this Gospel—they have a right to the power of the Meeting;" thus runs a minute of London Yearly Meeting in 1676.[1] Without clear consciousness of the change of direction, London Yearly Meeting now drifted over to a settled policy of birthright membership and all the other Yearly Meetings in fellowship with London took a similar course. It undoubtedly proved a source of numerical strength, but it provided nevertheless for a return to the "mixed" church-community which had once been held "apostate," and it led, as it was sure to lead, to the necessity of carrying, around the living nucleus of the Society, a great fringe of persons who had no first-hand insight and no triumphant experience of the power by which men live. Fox and the early Friends intended to have, not a Church, but a Society composed of persons "whose faith stood in the power of God," while this new action prepared the way for the inclusion of many nominal members.

The affairs of the Society of Friends were carried on and conducted in an ascending series of "Meetings for Business" as follows: The Preparative Meeting; the Monthly Meeting; the Quarterly Meeting; the Yearly Meeting. Besides this series there were also the Meeting for Sufferings; the Morning Meeting; the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and the Women's Yearly Meeting. The Monthly Meeting was the unit of authority. It was generally composed of the members of two or more particular congregations, each of which held its own meetings for worship and managed some of its local congregational affairs in a Preparative Meeting, which also prepared, or took the initial stage of business for the Monthly Meeting. The Monthly Meeting held the power to admit new members, to disown members, to give and receive certificates of removal, to build meeting-houses, to arrange for the marriage of its members, to take care of all meeting property in its possession, to have charge of all its records, to nominate all persons believed

[1] Quoted from Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 361. For a consideration of the basis of membership in the Society, see Braithwaite's *Second Period of Quakerism*, pp. 260, 298, 483, 506-509.

suitable for official stations, and to appoint representatives to the Quarterly Meeting.

The Quarterly Meeting was composed of a group of Monthly Meetings, was held four times in the year, dealt with matters which concerned the members of all the meetings in its area, and prepared business for the Yearly Meeting to which the Quarterly Meeting sent representatives. In some instances the functions of the Quarterly Meeting were performed by a Half-Year's Meeting, though this was true of America rather than of England.

The Yearly Meeting was constituted of all the members living in a defined area of country, and was the highest source of legislative authority in the Society for the membership within its boundary.[1] It met annually, received reports from the Quarterly Meetings, and dealt with the constructive problems of the entire body of membership. The sittings of London Yearly Meeting, which was always looked upon as the parent body, though without being officially recognized as head and without direct authority over the corresponding bodies in America, were occasions of august dignity, of deep searching of heart, of weighty deliberation, and often of powerful spiritual messages. The Meeting issued an annual Epistle which set forth the substance of its spiritual deliberations during the sittings, and these Epistles now reveal more clearly than do any other documents what was the focus of attention of the body from year to year.

The Meeting for Sufferings was originally a large committee of Friends appointed to look after cases of suffering in the days of persecution, and to collect all facts having to do with the persecution. After it became a definitely representative meeting, it was entrusted not

[1] The body in Great Britain was called London Yearly Meeting, which eventually included also all Friends living on the continent of Europe, in South Africa and Australasia. There was also a yearly meeting for Ireland, called Dublin Yearly Meeting, which was affiliated with and in some degree subordinate to London Y.M. Dublin Y.M. was held half-yearly until 1797, when it became an annual gathering. In America there were in the eighteenth century the following bodies: New England Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Virginia Yearly Meeting, North Carolina Yearly Meeting.

only with all cases of suffering, but came gradually also to deal, in the interim between Yearly Meetings, with all matters which concerned the deepest life and interest of the whole body, especially with its outreaching work in the world.[1] The Morning Meeting, dating from 1673, was constituted of the Ministers, and later of the Ministers and Elders of the meetings in and about London.[2] At first it met every Monday morning, though after 1797 it agreed to hold its meeting once each month. It exerted "a tender Christian care over Ministers from foreign parts who from time to time visited London and vicinity," and it judged of the religious concerns of Ministers who were liberated by their Monthly or Quarterly Meetings to travel in the service of the gospel in foreign parts, in cases where it was inconvenient to wait for the endorsement of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders. The Morning Meeting also until 1860 read and examined all manuscripts on religious subjects intended for publication by members of the Society of Friends. This work of censorship involved great labour, and resulted in the elimination of many proposed books. Ministers and Elders had, in addition to the Morning Meeting, Local Meetings, Quarterly Meetings, and a Yearly Meeting of both sexes, this last meeting being established in 1754 as the result of a concern of Samuel Fothergill.[3] It had long been the custom for the Morning

[1] Braithwaite's *Second Period* deals with the establishment and development of the Meeting for Sufferings, pp. 281-286.

[2] For the establishment and early development of this, see *Second Period*, pp. 276-281.

[3] At London Y. M. in 1753, Samuel Fothergill proposed that a Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders should be established. A committee was appointed to consider the proposal, and the report of the committee, which was in favour of establishing the new meeting, was left over for consideration next year. In 1754 the Y.M. approved the proposal, as the following Minute indicates: "The Report from the Committee last year to whom the Proposal of our Friend Samuel Fothergill for Establishing a Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders was referred having been deliberately considered, this meeting comes to the following Conclusion, viz. :

"That the Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders in London, on the Second Day preceding the Yearly Meeting, be adjourned to the Seventh Day succeeding at the third hour afternoon ; and that the several counties do appoint One or Two Elders out of their Representatives to Sit in the said Meeting as Members, with such publick Friends as are in Unity with their Monthly Meetings ; in Order to give an Account of the state of the Ministry in their respective

Meeting to have an enlarged meeting of Ministers on Monday morning preceding the Yearly Meeting. This gathering of Ministers frequently issued Epistles and planned ways for increasing the spiritual life and power of the body. The action of 1754 was, however, more than the addition of Elders to a previously existing meeting—Elders had already been added to the Morning Meeting; it was the establishment of a new meeting which from this time forward was a meeting of record.[1]

Previous to the year 1784 there existed in London Yearly Meeting no women's Yearly Meeting for discipline and record.[2] The Quaker women from the counties of Great Britain came up to London in large numbers at the time of the Yearly Meeting. They attended the meetings for worship, held on these occasions in the meeting-houses of the city, and they gathered informally by themselves to consider matters which peculiarly concerned the women of the Society, though they had no official standing, no legislative authority, and kept no records.[3] In 1753, the year that Samuel Fothergill proposed the establishment of a Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, a proposition was made to set up a Yearly Meeting for the women, a custom which prevailed everywhere in the American Yearly Meetings.[4]

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Counties, and of the Unity subsisting one with another and with their Meeting: And that the said Meeting of Ministers and Elders shall during the sitting of the Yearly Meeting, make from time to time such adjournments as they shall see meet, in order that opportunity may be afforded to Impart such Advice or Advices, and for such further Service or Services, as in the wisdom of Truth shall appear to them necessary: Provided such adjournment doth not interfere with the Sittings of this Meeting." *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. x. p. 551. The Report of the Committee in 1753 stated that "the said Meeting for Ministers and Elders shall not in any wise take upon them to interfere with any part of the exercise of the Discipline of the Church belonging to the yearly meeting of Business held in London." *Minutes*, vol. x. pp. 455, 456.

[1] The Minutes date from 1755.

[2] The Women's Yearly Meeting in Ireland dates from 1679.

[3] For other activities of the women see *Second Period*, p. 287.

[4] The following proposition was addressed to London Y.M. in 1753 and signed by twenty-eight women Friends of York:

"Dear Friends,—It is with thankful hearts we have to testify Our unanimous Concurrence with the pious Zeal, and faithful Concern of Soul, manifested by our dear Sisters, in divers Counties of this Nation, for a needful reformation & Regulation in our Discipline, humbly hoping with them, that the Establishing an Annual Women's Meeting may be of great advantage in the furtherance thereof, wherein the Affairs of the Church, which properly come under our

In fact, this proposition to establish a Yearly Meeting for women was largely due to the influence of William Brown, with the strong support of John Pemberton, both of Philadelphia, then on a religious visit to England.[1] The men of London Yearly Meeting were not yet ready for the innovation. One Friend pithily remarked: "I see it, but not now; I behold it, but not nigh!"[2] And a generation passed before the idea became fully alive again. For the next thirty years the women continued to meet with "great service in general and to the youth in particular," but with no official functions recognized by the men. In 1765 the women requested the men's Yearly Meeting to allow them to address an Epistle to the women's Quarterly Meetings throughout the Nation. The subject remained "weightily on the mind of Friends" (*i.e.* men Friends) until 1766, when the following Minute was produced which hardly flattered the women:

The forming of such a Meeting hath appeared to our predecessors, as it does to us, a matter of great difficulty. As therefore the meeting of a number of Women Friends, and of suitable abilities to carry on so weighty and important a work,

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Notice, and particularly relate to our own Sex, to whose Care the Education of the Youth in a great Measure falls, may be managed in the Wisdom of Truth, and beautiful Gospel Order, which becomes our high and holy Profession; And we conceive by the help of such a meeting, Quarterly and Monthly Meetings would be Strengthened and Encouraged in their faithful Endeavours, for the Promotion of this Great and honourable Work, which we have jointly a Concern in, viz., of Exhorting, admonishing and Stirring up One another to the performance of our Several Duties, Labouring in our Stations with Meekness and Fear, to Restore and bring back those that are gone astray from the Self denying Path our worthy predecessors trode, and which the true Christian in every Age must walk in, conformable to the Precepts of Christ; It is also with solid Joy we have to inform you, that we behold a noble Spirited Remnant of our Sex raised up by the Gracious Lord of the Harvest, who are gifted for the Discipline of the Church, not only in some remote Counteys, but we trust in this City, who are ready to join hands and hearts with such who are pained for the Cause, under the Lamentable Views of the gross Declension so glaringly Demonstrated in our Age; And have waited to Exert themselves on this account on Truth's behalf:

"And, Dear Friends, as we now find our way opened by infinite wisdom to Express somewhat of our Sentiments, after weighing the proposal in the most Solemn manner, do heartily agree in Laying the Same before you, Craving that it may not be Slightly passed by, but become your tender Care and Concern to Assist those women who Labour with you in this Gospel Concern, for the Glory of God, and welfare of his whole Flock and Family the world over." *Minutes of London Yearly Meeting*, vol. x. pp. 455-457. (*Minutes of London Y.M.* are kept in Devonshire House Library, London.)

[1] *Life and Travels of John Pemberton* (London, 1844), p. 32.

[2] Reported in *Memorials of Rebecca Jones* (Phila., 1849), p. 64.

appears to us very doubtful and uncertain, and can but subject the few who are qualified to assist in this work to great inconveniency, it is therefore our unanimous opinion that the present is not the proper season for complying with the proposal.[1]

Once more, in 1783 and 1784, John Pemberton (who with William Brown had stirred up the women of York Quarterly Meeting in 1753) visited Great Britain and used again every opportunity to arouse women Friends to secure the privileges which their sisters enjoyed in America. The definite proposal which culminated in the establishment of the women's Yearly Meeting in 1784 appears to have been suggested by another American Friend, Rebecca Jones of Philadelphia, who was at this time engaged in extended religious labours in Great Britain and Ireland. Speaking under a sense of deep religious conviction to a large gathering of women Friends in London at the time of the Yearly Meeting in 1784, she urged the women to take action to secure the privilege of having a meeting of their own.[2] As a result of this concern the following expressive minute was adopted by the women and sent to the men's Meeting:

It coming weightily under the consideration of this meeting, the great loss it sustains for want of its being regularly constituted a meeting for Discipline, the following Friends are desired to lay the concern before our men Friends now sitting, and bring in a report to our next adjournment; viz.: Esther Tuke, Elizabeth Gibson, Alice Rigg, Christiana Hustler, Mercy Ransom, Martha Routh, Tabitha Middleton, Susanna Row and Sarah Corbyn, in which service the company of the women Friends from America would be truly acceptable.[3]

The minute of the men's Meeting declares that

. . . nine women Friends under a deputation from the Women's Meeting now sitting in this city, accompanied with three others on a Religious visit from America [Rebecca Jones, Mehetabel Jenkins and Rebecca Wright] have in a solid and weighty manner laid before this Meeting a proposition that the Women's

[1] *Minutes*, vol. xiii. p. 204.

[2] John Pemberton expressed in his Diary great regret that he was unable to be present at the Y.M. of 1784, "to join in promoting" the concern of the women. *Op. cit.* p. 171.

[3] *Minutes*, vol. xvii. p. 453.

Meeting, constantly held during the time of the Yearly Meeting, may be authorized to correspond with the Women's Meetings of the several counties and places which correspond with this Meeting, in order to be helpful to one another in the exercise of the Discipline.[1]

There is a tradition that when Joseph Gurney Bevan, a prominent Friend, and at a later time clerk of the Meeting, saw the delegation of women advancing up the aisle toward the table, with Esther Tuke, whom Rebecca Jones calls "a sort of princess," at its head, he audibly said, in the words of King Ahasuerus, "What is thy petition, Queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee; what is thy request? and it shall be performed."[2] As a matter of plain historical fact the request or petition was not so easily gained. Some Friends of weight and importance strongly opposed the plan. One Friend remarked that it would be preposterous to have a body with two heads, to which Rebecca Jones responded: "There is but one Head to the body which is the Church, even Jesus Christ, and in Him male and female are one." Alice Rigg, we are told in Rebecca Jones's letters, pleaded nobly for the women's Meeting, and "Martha Routh silenced David Barclay."[3] An anonymous letter from a man Friend, quoted in the *Memorials of Rebecca Jones*, says:

The most remarkable occurrence [during Yearly Meeting] this time was that the women have obtained a point which they have long thirsted after—that is, a Yearly Meeting, regularly established by representatives from the Quarterly Meetings. So thou may, at some future meeting, be a member of this female Parliament. . . . I was no favourer of this measure, well knowing that *power* is a dangerous tool in some hands, who, if one gives them an inch, may take an ell. And so strong was my prejudice against it that, *though most of the solid part of the men* (and all of the

[1] *Minutes*, vol. xvii. p. 354. Patience Brayton of Rhode Island was in attendance at London Y.M. in 1784, but she does not appear to have been with the delegation to the men's Meeting.

[2] This is manifestly only a tradition. It hardly fits the well-known dignity and decorum of Y.M. procedure. Esther Tuke, head of this delegation, was the second wife of William Tuke, the founder of York Retreat. She died in 1794.

[3] *Memorials*, p. 65. David Barclay was one of the most important members of the meeting; a very distinguished citizen of London.

women to be sure) seemed to favour it under a right influence, yet I felt it not.[1]

The cause of the women finally triumphed. Prejudices such as those expressed in the above letter gave way, and the following minute was adopted :

This Meeting, after a solid and deliberate consideration of the proposition brought in from the Women's Meeting, held annually in this city, agrees that the said Meeting be at liberty to correspond in writing with the Quarterly Meetings of Women Friends; to receive accounts from them, and issue such advice as, in the wisdom of Truth, from time to time may appear necessary and conducive to their mutual edification. For this purpose it will be expedient that the said meeting be a meeting of record, and be denominated the Yearly Meeting of Women Friends held in London; yet such meeting is not to be so far considered a meeting of Discipline, as to make rules nor yet alter the present queries, without the concurrence of this Meeting.[2]

More than a hundred years later, in 1896, London Yearly Meeting recognized women Friends as "a constituent part" of all meetings for Church affairs, and in 1907 the women's Yearly Meeting as a separate body came to an end, and women Friends henceforth became an integral and undivided part of London Yearly Meeting. The same course had still earlier been adopted in most American Yearly Meetings.[3]

The slow achievement by the women of their desire to have a Yearly Meeting indicates that the men Friends did not at once rise to the full significance of the Quaker faith that there was to be no distinction of sex in the Church of God. In the function of public ministry there really was no distinction made from the very first, while throughout the eighteenth century, as we shall see, women Friends took their full part in ministry and spiritual service. In the business affairs of the Society, however, they did not have complete equality with the men. Where the practice prevailed, as it did for many years in London

[1] *Memorials*, p. 66.

[2] *Minutes of London Y.M.*, vol. xvii. pp. 452-455, contain the minutes above cited. It is an interesting fact that Robert Valentine and William Matthews of America assisted in drafting this minute.

[3] Philadelphia Y. M. (both Orthodox and Hicksite) is an exception to this rule.

and in some other localities, for the Monthly Meetings to be jointly held, the women could share all tasks and privileges with the men, but wherever they held separate meetings, as they usually did, they had only subordinate functions, and the men's Meeting was the authoritative body. In London Yearly Meeting affairs only men took part before 1784, and after that date the women were not co-ordinate in the full sense. They were given the privilege of considering the matters with which the men dealt, and of joining in approval with the conclusions of the latter, but in the last resort the men Friends constituted the authoritative Yearly Meeting.

Only when in recent times the Yearly Meeting became a joint body of men and women did all distinction and inequality disappear.[1] But while not sharing the full privileges of equality in business affairs the women of the Society of Friends nevertheless did have rights, privileges, and duties far beyond those enjoyed by the women in most religious bodies. They were free to engage in congregational prayer and in all types of public ministry. They further had the opportunity of carrying on their own meetings for business, where they became expert in Quaker polity, accustomed to speaking in public, and capable of transacting all forms of community business. They did not quite win all that belonged to them in principle and theory, but they at least had a large place in the spiritual work of their Society, they had their gifts recognized, and their talents appreciated and used, and it hardly occurred to them in the eighteenth century that there were fuller rights still to be attained.

Another type of Meeting, now extinct, played an important part in the life of the Society during the eighteenth century. This was the "Circular Yearly Meeting," or "Circulating Yearly Meeting." The Circular Meetings received their name from the fact that they moved from place to place, *i.e.* "circulated" within the area of the Quarterly Meetings which managed them. The greatest of the Circular Meetings were the ones held in the Western

[1] Most American Yearly Meetings became joint bodies between 1875 and 1885.

Counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wilts, Dorset, Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, and Warwick.[1] They were not meetings for business; they were large annual gatherings of Friends and others, sometimes in communities where not many Friends resided, held for the purpose of "spreading the truth." These meetings offered a slight parallel to the popular meetings held by the early Methodists. Through them itinerant ministering Friends found an opportunity to reach large crowds somewhat outside beaten tracks, and to interpret the Quaker message both to the membership and to the multitude.[2] The crowds were often far too large to be held in the local meeting-house, and in some districts halls were hired or booths were erected, while on fair days the meetings were often held in the open air. Sometimes two or three meetings were carried on simultaneously, one for example in the meeting-house, one in a hall, and one in a booth or under the open sky. Sometimes "a great barn" served for the occasion. Not uncommonly the meetings continued for three days, with varying degrees of success and effectiveness. The visiting Ministers, who bore the main burden of the ministry, and who shared the responsibility with local Friends, often speak in their Journals of the heavy strain which they felt during the period of the meetings. They looked forward to "a painful prospect" and they looked back not infrequently to a time of "deep exercise and travail." Sometimes they were "free and favoured," and at other times they were "lean and stripped," and sat before the great throng "in the silence of all flesh," with no bread to offer.

One of the most real difficulties attending these Circulating Meetings was the boisterous character of the crowds that came to them. The features that have become familiar in great camp-meeting gatherings were not lacking in some of the centres where the Circulating Meetings were held. A letter written in 1749 by

[1] Warwick joined in 1734 and Wilts dropped out.

[2] These Circular Meetings are dealt with in Alfred W. Brown's *Evesham Friends in the Olden Time* (1885). They are frequently referred to in the Quaker Journals of the eighteenth century.

William Grimshaw, Vicar of Haworth, reveals forcibly the mixed character of the throng of attenders.

"There are," he says, "numbers of carnal, careless people, young and old, who under pretence of hearing you, make no more of it than a rendezvous of vanity and wickedness; cursing, swearing, fighting, revelling, etc., abound, and this, with many, not only for the remainder of the day, but commonly all the night, and most of the day following, if not longer." [1]

These disturbing accessories and the feebleness of ministry in many quarters gradually inclined Friends to give up holding these meetings, and they slowly disappeared, though a few meetings of a similar type survived to recent times, notably those held at Jordans, Armscot, and Brigflatts.[2]

The "office-bearers" of the Society were not clearly differentiated or sharply defined in 1725. The era of leadership by personality and by the inherent power of personal gifts was gradually yielding to an era of system and discipline and official authority; though the Quaker ideal then and always called for wide personal liberty and for a large sphere of individual initiative. In the primitive stage the persons of paramount influence and leadership were, with some notable exceptions, persons who possessed large gifts for public ministry and apostolic preaching service. They were called indiscriminately "Ministers" or "Elders" [3] and they were not in any case "officials," but persons who revealed in their lives a divine calling and election, and who bore the mark of apostleship by the fruit of their ministry. Gradually, about the opening of our period, there began to differentiate out of the inner group of spiritually gifted persons three characteristic types, embodying three fairly distinct functions, the

[1] The Vicar's letter, with an interesting reply from David Hall, is printed in *The Irish Friend* for June 1841. This correspondence is reprinted in *The* (London) *Friend* for Third Mo. 1845.

[2] See Letter on "Circulating Yearly Meetings" by Norman Penney in *The British Friend*, June 1903, p. 158; *Second Period*, pp. 546-551; and a valuable contribution by A. Neave Brayshaw in the Handbook of the Y.M. for 1908, pp. 55-60.

[3] Even now in the rural districts of New England a minister of any denomination is called "Elder."

Minister, the Elder, and the Overseer. The Minister, who might be either man or woman, was not "appointed" in the strict sense, but was "recognized" by his meeting, if he were a person possessed of prophetic insight, of more than usual powers of persuasive speech, of clean, sober character, and of convicting quality of life. What is called "recognizing" or "recording" did not become settled practice in London Yearly Meeting until 1773. The custom had prevailed from the beginning of the Morning Meeting for all public Friends who attended it to write their names in its book of Ministers. If the name was unchallenged this was considered as equivalent to recognition or acknowledgment. In 1722 William Gibson entered his name in the Ministers' book, and the Meeting expressed its dissatisfaction with him. He appealed from the decision, and the Yearly Meeting came to the conclusion that it belonged only to Monthly, Quarterly, Half-year's, or Yearly Meetings to "disown" a Minister. This Yearly Meeting also decided that "no person's name from the 8th day of 7 mo. next be entered in the Morning Meeting Book of Ministering Friends as a Minister till he or she produces a certificate from the Monthly or Quarterly Meeting to which he or she shall belong." Whereupon the Morning Meeting requested Monthly Meetings to furnish a list of Ministers whom they recognized as such. This decision is the foundation of the practice of recording Ministers. The action of 1773, mentioned above, was the adoption of the following minute:

> It is recommended that approved Ministers and Elders in the several Monthly Meetings tenderly advise those who come forth in public testimony to wait patiently under a deep consideration of their state of infancy and childhood without intruding themselves into Meetings of Ministers and Elders.

Ministers and Elders are further encouraged to report such persons to their Monthly or Quarterly Meeting when "their fruits afford sufficient evidence of their qualification for the service of ministry," so that the Meeting may, after due deliberation, "recommend them to attend select

Meetings of Ministers and Elders.[1] The immense part which the Ministers, especially the itinerant Ministers, took in the formation of the ideals of the Society, and in the cultivation of depth and piety in the body will come out in later chapters.

The Elder, as he came to be known in the later period, was himself for the most part "dumb" as to public ministry, but was chosen to oversee the spiritual welfare of the Meeting to which he belonged, and to advise and counsel the Ministers. It had long been the custom to select "weighty and sensible Friends of unblamable conversation," "to visit the families of Friends in the Love of God;" "to admonish and advise them in the peaceable spirit of Truth, as occasion may open,"[2] but these visiting Friends were not differentiated into an official class. They were chosen on the basis of their gifts and character, not because they held a distinct church position. The differentiation of Ministers and Elders into well-defined classes proceeded more rapidly in America than in England, and it appears that Elders were appointed in American Meetings from the opening of the eighteenth century. As early as 1692 Irish Friends had taken steps to appoint Friends from each Province to "meet apart and inquire into the condition of worship and ministry," and some of the Quarterly Meetings in England about the year 1700 began to appoint Elders.[3] The step which clearly differentiated the Elder from the Minister and marked out the function of the former was taken by London Yearly Meeting in 1727 as follows:

A Proposition from ye Friends of Wilts relating to ye Extending a Care of Friends to young Ministers, etc., being read, this Meeting desires all Monthly Meetings to appoint serious, discreet, and judicious Friends, who are not Ministers, tenderly to Encourage and help young Ministers, and advise others as they shall in ye wisdom of God see occasion: and y^t^ where there are meetings of Ministering ffriends, such ffriends so chosen be

[1] See *Printed Proceedings of Y.M.* for 1904, pp. 166-169.

[2] Recommendation of the Epistle of London Y.M. for 1708; repeated in 1729, 1733, and 1751.

[3] See Braithwaite's *Second Period of Quakerism*, p. 542.

admitted as members of such Meetings of Ministers, and Act therein for the Good purposes aforesaid.[1]

In the Epistle of this year, sent to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of "Friends and Brethren in Great Britain and elsewhere," the "Elders" are entreated "to take the oversight of the flock of Christ, not by constraint but willingly, not as lords over God's heritage, but as good examples," and the further directions given to them would indicate that they still were expected in some degree to share the work of ministry and that they were to exercise a moral supervision, as we know they did, over the daily life of the membership.[2] In the Yearly Meeting Epistle of 1744 the Elders are exhorted to watch over the flock of Christ in the several meetings, to advise and assist the weak and to endeavour to restore any who have gone astray. In fact they are called to do the work of Overseers.[3]

In 1751 the Yearly Meeting revived the ancient custom of persons to look after the general oversight of the membership, so that it would appear that for still some years these two functions—the spiritual oversight of Ministers and the moral oversight of the membership—

[1] *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. vi. p. 461. Wilts Q.M. Minutes for 3rd of 11th mo. 1725 has the following entry:

"Edward Gye Brot the following proposition from Lavington Mo. Meeting.

'And they are ordered to acquaint ye Qua. Meeting yt we propose it to their Consideration, whether it may not be proper to give ye next Deputies for the Yearly Meetg Instructions to p'pose to yt Meeting ye taking into yr Serious and mature Consideration ye Care of young unexperienced & Injudicious Ministers among frds who may not have Occasion for Certificates to travel & yet may want ye good Counsel Advice & help of yr Elders or of proper persons or Meetings for p'venting ye diservice & damage such persons Sometimes do to ye Society respecting ye Reputation of Frids. * * * As ye yearly meetg hath taken care of our Society in giving directions yt ministering frinds who travel abroad shall have Certificates so yr Care may be Suitably extended to such as do not travel abroad in such manner as may tend to ye growth in Grace decent sound & Edifying Ministry at home to ye Comfort of Frds & prosperity of Truth Subject to such Care & oversight for yt end as the Yearly Meeting shall think fit.'

"With wch this Meeting agrees & yt it be entered among the other instructions given to our deputies for the Yearly Meeting at the next Quarterly Meeting." [Nothing in Minutes of Lavington M.M. shows the occasion of this recommendation.]

[2] *Epistles of London Y.M.* (1858), vol. i. p. 179. Some Mo. Meetings had for years before this date followed the custom of appointing non-preaching Elders for Counsel. See *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, vol. xii. p. 396.

[3] *Epistles of London Y.M.*, vol. i. p. 246.

remained ill defined. Those who were to be selected for this care of the membership were often called "interval Friends," *i.e.*, Friends who exercised the care over the membership in the interval between the Monthly Meetings.[1] A definite further step in the same direction was taken in 1755 as a minute of the Yearly Meeting of that year indicates. It is as follows:

Your Committee appointed to Consider the Accounts from the several Quarterly Meetings respecting the Queries peculiar to themselves, Do Report, That upon considering the same, and the varieties that appear therein, and also that divers Counties are without any, Do Deliver it as their Sense and Judgment, that it may tend to the Benefit of the Society, were the following Queries sent from this Meeting, to be answered by the Monthly Meetings at each Quarterly Meeting, viz.

. . . . . .

Have you Two or more Faithful Friends deputed in Each particular Meeting to have the Oversight thereof, and is Care taken when anything appears amiss that the rules of our Discipline be put in Practice ?[2]

The recommendations of this Committee were adopted by the Yearly Meeting and ordered to be sent to the Counties.

It was, however, not until 1789 that the distinction was closely and technically drawn in London Yearly Meeting between Elders and Overseers. Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting asked Warwickshire Quarterly Meeting whether the offices of Elder and Overseer are one and the same under different appellations or two distinct offices for different services. The Quarterly Meeting put the problem before the Yearly Meeting for its decision and secured a definite answer. This was given in the following minute:

A Proposition from the Quarterly Meeting of Warwickshire was also referred from the Yearly Meeting [to the Epistle Committee] and considered and this Committee is of the Judgment that the offices of Elder & Overseer are distinct, and do not

[1] *Epistles of London Y.M.*, vol. i. p. 273.

[2] *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. xi. p. 76. This does not indicate new action, but only a more careful formulation of a *method and practice*.

coincide in one Person unless appointed to each, and that Overseers under that Appointment only, are not entitled to sit in Meetings of Ministers & Elders. And it is the further Judgment of this Committee that all such Appointments be made as directed by the Yearly Meeting in 1784 respecting the choice of Elders. And it is the Judgment of this Meeting that the Appointment of Overseers should be made as directed by the Yearly Meeting in 1784 in like manner as in the choice of Elders.[1]

By a process of evolution, the stages of which can no longer be traced in detail, the Elder in a Quaker Meeting came to be a person of silent but august authority. The minute of 1727 declared that they were "tenderly to encourage and help young Ministers." This part of their mission tended to slip into the dim background, if it did not fall entirely into abeyance, and the other part of their function rose in proportion — to "advise and counsel Ministers" and to "keep them to the form of sound words" and to see that none "pretend to be wise above what is written, or in a pretended wisdom go about to explain the things of God in man's wisdom."[2] The Elders had no written formulas of belief or set declarations of faith by which to test the "soundness" of Ministers, but certain unwritten and more or less subconscious standards of "truth," as they called it, and of approved manner and appearance and tone, came gradually into operation almost universally among them. Little by little the *elder-instinct* —a kind of infallible habit of mind—formed in those to whom this function was assigned. They became the

[1] *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. xviii. (1789) p. 521.

The Warwickshire "Proposition" was as follows:

"It is the unanimous sense and judgment of the Members of this Meeting now present that it is highly requisite that such Friends as are appointed to responsible Stations in our religious Society, sho^d understand fully & explicitly the purposes of their appointments and as some diversity has occurred both in sentiment & practice, we submit the following proposition to the Consideration of the Yearly Meeting, viz.

'It not appearing clear to some Friends whether the office of Elder and Overseer be one and the same under different Appellations, or two distinct Offices, for different Services, or whether Overseers (under that Appointment only) be members of the Meeting of Ministers & Elders; we are fearful lest the want of full explanation should occasion any remissness in the execution of an important part of our Discipline, and have therefore thought it expedient to lay the Case before the Yearly Meeting, believing its Advice and direction will be acceptable to many Friends.'" *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. xvii. (1784) p. 450.

[2] See *Epistles of London Y.M.*, vol. i. p. 181.

embodiment and incarnation of the unwritten traditions, the unuttered and slowly gestated customs and habits of this quiet people, and they thus formed the conserving, steadying force which kept the Society year after year always the same. They constituted, together with the Ministers, separate "select" meetings within the Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings,[1] and these "select meetings" in large measure matured the spiritual ideals of the Society and created the atmosphere, or "temperature," in which the Elders swathed their lives and wrapped their spirits, and under which they formed their mental habits. They acquired the power to sit through the longest meetings without stirring or moving.[2] They never seemed to look at anything and yet they saw everything that happened. If anybody fell asleep they knew it. If any person was present and yet not "gathered," they were aware of it. They never looked at a timepiece and had no hour-glass and yet they knew by a kind of infallible click when it was time to close meeting. They seemed unmoved as the desert-sphinx while some Minister was preaching and no change of facial muscle betrayed in the least their approval or disapproval, but if the Minister made the slightest slip in quoting scripture, or if he deviated from "truth," or if his garb, or voice, or manner

[1] In 1753 on the proposal of Samuel Fothergill, as already stated, it was thought advisable to bring before the Yearly Meeting the plan of a united Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders of both sexes. The plan brought before the meeting was "That each Quarterly Meeting should nominate representatives (being deputed Elders, not to exceed two in number for each) to render a just account of the state of the ministry in their respective counties and of the unity of the Ministers one with another, and with the Meetings to which they belong"; and that this representative meeting should nominate "a suitable number of weighty and experienced Elders to attend the several sittings of the meetings for worship during the Yearly Meeting, in order to take a practical oversight of the conduct thereof." It ends by saying, "the matter is to remain solidly in the minds of Friends, and be reconsidered at the next Yearly Meeting." The next year (1754) this scheme was adopted and "from that time an annual meeting, composed only of representative Elders and "such public Friends as are in unity with their Monthly Meetings," was held. *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. x. pp. 551, 552. In 1773 the limit of two Elders only for each county was withdrawn, and since then its scope has been still further enlarged to include all approved Ministers and appointed Elders." See Article by W. C. Westlake in *Friends Quarterly Examiner* (1876), vol. x. p. 161.

[2] There is a well-known story of a little boy who was taken by his father to a large and impressive meeting where the upper seat was filled with a moveless row of Ministers and Elders. The little boy bent over and whispered to his father: "Are those men really alive, father?"

revealed that he was not "seasoned" or "savoury" or "in the life," *he* would know it himself before he got home, or in the very near future. They were persons of few words, epigrammatic, crisp, swift of judgment, and in the main, with all their rigidity and conservatism, afraid of nothing on earth except disobedience to "apprehended Light and Duty." They were meek and gentle to look upon, but somehow they acquired an extraordinary mastery over the membership. What they meditated in silence sooner or later became a fact. They shaped the development of the Discipline. They wove the dead past into the living present and kept the "truth" as nearly as possible unaltered. They were guardians of custom and they used their position and authority to preserve the plain speech and the type of garb which the fathers had honoured. They were weak in historical knowledge and in reflective judgment, but they were unerring in their sense of what was *becoming* for members of their beloved Society, and without talking much they builded the structure of the Society. The great period of the authority of Elders is the period from 1750 to 1850.

Robert Barclay (of Reigate) in an interesting chapter (Chapter xxii.) of his *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* has contended that the setting up of "Elders" was a profound blunder and a distinctly false step.[1] It was, he believed, due to timidity, and to fear of the excessive influence of the Ministers, and of their tendency to become "unsound." Barclay's contention is not borne out by impartial historical study. The eldership was already well recognized in America before the proposition for its establishment in England was made by Wiltshire Quarterly Meeting, and it had also had its beginnings in England long before the distinct step of 1727. It was at the time a constructive step in English Quakerism. The joining of "seasoned" persons of insight and judgment with the ministering Friends in the spiritual oversight of the Church was a wise course of action. It is greatly to be regretted no doubt that the Elders did

[1] For a criticism of Elders see *Second Period*, pp. 543, 544, 633.

not possess more constructive insight and did not discover more effective ways to guide those whose gifts in the ministry were developing and to help them cultivate their minds and improve their style of speaking. They were often "repressive" and they became the strongest conservative force in the Society, but they also embodied in a positive way the ideals of their period, and on the whole they improved the tone and quality of the ministry. They did not create the quietistic temper of the Society —Ministers were more inclined to Quietism than were Elders—and they added much to the weight, dignity, and moral power of the body in the period of their peculiar glory. The general fear of broad mental training and the assumption on the part of all Friends of the period that messages were to be waited for and were to be given from above without human effort were in large measure responsible for the inadequate type of ministry which prevailed in many meetings. The Elders did not originate either the fear or the assumption. They shared both with the larger mass of Friends, and they merely expressed and acted upon views and theories that were in operation before Elders began their reign of influence. What was needed was a truer interpretation of the central Quaker principle, but there was no one at hand who could render that immense service, nor was the time ripe for it. Everything connected with the work and business of the Society tended to become rigid and static as time went on, and the Elders of course exhibited this solidifying, congealing tendency but they did not produce it.

The Meetings of Ministers and Elders accumulated in the course of time certain definite working principles by which the Elders were guided in the performance of their duties. These principles were called the "Advices for Ministers and Elders." A very interesting collection of these Advices was printed in 1783 and is as follows:

A Memorial of some necessary advices recommended to Ministers, and, in love of the gospel, to be communicated to the several meetings of Ministers and Elders in Great Britain and Ireland, as caution and counsel.

1. Against undue and restless behaviour under the ministry of any Friend, whilst in the unity of the body.

2. That all be cautious of using unnecessary preambles, and laying too great stress on their testimony, by too positively asserting a divine motion, and frequently repeating the same; seeing no such pretensions will obtain credit when it is not manifestly so; and where it is, the baptizing power of truth accompanying the words, is the best evidence.

an 3. Against misquoting and misapplying the holy scriptures; d it is desired that all those concerned be frequent in reading them.

4. To be careful how they fall on disputed points in their testimony, and making such objections as they do not clearly answer; and also against giving repeated expectations of coming to a conclusion.

5. Against hurting meetings towards the conclusion, by unnecessary additions, when the meeting was left well before.

6. Against unbecoming tones, sounds, gestures, and all affectation, which are not agreeable to Christian gravity.

7. Against undertaking or running into employments they have no knowledge or experience of, as some have done, to their own hurt, the injury of others, and the reproach of their religious profession; but to employ themselves in business that they are acquainted with, to avoid an idle life.

8. Not to speak against persons, or report things on hearsay, but to treat with the parties concerned, and thereby prevent sowing discord.

9. That their apparel, and the furniture of their houses, their tables, and way of living, may be with decency, moderation, and temperance, that they be good examples to others.

10. Against men and women travelling as companions in service, to avoid all occasions of offence thereby.

11. To beware of too much familiarity, tending to draw out the affections one of another, to their hurt.

12. That ministering Friends be careful not to hurt one another's service in publick meetings, but every one have a tender regard for others; that nothing be offered with a view to popularity, but in humility, and the fear of the Lord.

13. Against running, in their own wills, to disturb or interrupt any people in their worship; or presuming to prophesy, in their own spirits, against any nation, city, town, people, or person.

14. That Ministers, when they travel in the service of truth, be careful not to make their visits burthensome, or the gospel chargeable.

15. That none show or expose manuscripts, so as to give

expectations of their being printed, before they are approved by the second-day's morning-meeting of Ministers and Elders in London.

16. That Ministers and Elders be careful to keep their whole conversation unspotted, being examples of meekness, temperance, patience, and charity.

And lastly, As prayer and supplication to God is an essential part of his worship, it must be performed in spirit and in truth, with a right understanding seasoned with grace. Therefore let Ministers be careful how and what they offer in prayer, avoiding many words and repetitions, and not to run from supplication into declaration, as though the Lord wanted information: and let all be cautious of too often repeating the high and holy name, or his attributes, by a long conclusion; neither let prayer be in a formal and customary way, to conclude a meeting, without an awful sense of divine assistance attending the mind.[1]

The Overseers did not become well-defined officers in the Society in London Yearly Meeting, as we have seen, until 1789, though for a long period before this the Elders, and then specially appointed committees of men and women, had been busy, in the intervals of Monthly Meetings, with the task of visiting the membership and of overseeing their "daily walk and conversation." The custom of appointing Friends to inspect the faithfulness of the membership in the Truth was already a long-standing one, and the term "Overseer" had frequently been used. For example, "Overseers" were mentioned by name in Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, with their characteristic functions, as early as 1752, but the Minutes of this Meeting show that the Elders were often treated as Overseers and did the work of Overseers. This custom had already long prevailed in American meetings. The earliest printed Discipline of New England Y.M. (1785) says:

That each Monthly Meeting choose two or more sober and judicious men friends, and two or more women friends, to be Overseers in each preparative meeting, which Overseers are to render account of their service to the Monthly Meeting at least once a quarter, and to be annually appointed or re-chosen.[2]

[1] *Extracts from Minutes and Advices of London Y.M.* Printed by James Phillips, 1783, p. 149. Most of these Advices are as early as 1702.

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 39.

The London Yearly Meeting Queries in 1760 asked if two or more faithful Friends are deputed to have oversight of particular meetings, but before 1789, as I have said, this function was not technically defined and often devolved on the Elders. These Overseers, who were in the course of time charged with responsibility for the moral life of the membership, did not originally form a part of the "select" Meeting of Ministers and Elders, but they soon became a weighty factor in the disciplinary machinery of the Church and their function of oversight was no light matter.

I have spoken of their responsibility for "the moral life" of the membership, but it must be understood that those who have the oversight among a "peculiar people" do not draw a very sharp line between what is "moral" and what is "sacred custom and good order" for the particular Society. Thus these Quaker Overseers had a very wide series of possible offences under their hands. It was, however, not an altogether negative and corrective function which they exercised among their scattered flock. They had a very positive pattern which they were endeavouring to get woven into view in the lives of their members.

Their task was in many respects a most unusual experiment. For centuries the pastoral care of the flock in the Church and the moral oversight of its members had been assigned to the local Minister in each parish. He had a double mission laid upon him, to expound the Gospel as preacher and to shepherd the flock as pastor. The Friends had no such cure of souls in their regimen. They had no one in their local meetings set apart to do the preaching. It was the business of the corporate group, under the guidance of the Spirit, to produce its ministry out of its abounding spiritual life. And so, too, it was assumed that a local church of saints, without any specialized shepherd, would as a corporate body minister to the daily moral and spiritual life of those who composed the group. Gradually it appeared that this plan pushed the democratic ideal quite too far, and for the

sake of practical efficiency a differentiated band of overseeing Friends had, as we have seen, this care of the flock definitely laid upon them. They took up the task in that spirit of devotion and with that sacred sense of responsibility which have always been the characteristic source of strength in the Quaker movement. These Overseers were for the most part ordinary men and women, like the rest of the group, without any special training, gifted only in good common sense, in balance and poise of character, in the elemental human qualities which breed trust and confidence, and endowed, of course, as all Friends were in this period, with an unquestioning faith in divine inward help and illumination for their assistance. They proved to be, through the succeeding generations following their appointment, a source of real spiritual strength and of moral control of the numerous groups in which they quietly, unostentatiously laboured, and their ministry of discipline and of counsel saved many from breaking anchor and drifting on the rocks. Like the Elders, they had no absolute rules to guide them, but there slowly accumulated, as was the case with the Elders, a body of Advices and Queries which furnished the Overseers with a pretty clear line of procedure. The Advices, which slowly evolved with the growth of the Society, were in the eighteenth century concerned in large measure with the regulation of the outward manner of living and with ideals of the "simple life," as the following General Advices, adopted near the end of the eighteenth century, show:

It is agreed, that the following advices be read at least once in a year, in the men's and women's Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and in preparative meetings.

Friends are advised

I. To observe due moderation in the furniture of their houses; and to avoid superfluity in their manner of living;

II. To attend to the limitations of truth in their trade, and other outward concerns;

III. To be careful to place out children, of all degrees, amongst those friends whose care and example will be most likely to conduce to their safety; to prefer such servants and apprentices

as are members of our society; and not to demand exorbitant apprentice-fees: lest they frustrate the care of friends in these respects:

IV. To endeavour to make way for their servants to attend meetings, and to encourage them therein:

V. To guard carefully against the introduction of pernicious books into their families:

VI. To make their wills, and settle their outward affairs, in time of health:

VII. To refrain from being concerned in lotteries: which this meeting considers as a species of gaming.

VIII. Finally, it is recommended that all friends watch over one another for good; that when occasions of uneasiness first appear in any, they may be treated with in privacy and tenderness, before the matter be communicated to another. Thus the hands of those concerned in the further exercise of the discipline will not be weakened by a consciousness of their having themselves departed from the true order of the gospel. And friends everywhere are advised to endeavour to maintain "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."[1]

The Advices became, however, at a later time more inclusive and far more spiritual in their scope. In fact, the best of the Advices were somewhat after the manner of the Apostle Paul's brief religious and moral counsel to his churches, especially as expressed in 1 Thessalonians v. 12-24, and Romans xii.-xiv., and they presented, as they took shape for each generation, a short and impressive compendium of the essential piety of the Society of the time.[2]

[1] From *Extracts*, 2nd edition, 1802.

[2] The Advices of London Yearly Meeting as now in use are as follows:

"Take heed, dear Friends, we entreat you, to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, who leads, through unfeigned repentance and living faith in the Son of God, to reconciliation with our Heavenly Father, and to the blessed hope of eternal life, purchased for us by the one offering of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Be earnestly concerned in religious meetings reverently to present yourselves before the Lord; and seek, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to worship God through Jesus Christ.

"Prize the privilege of access by Him unto the Father. Continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

"Be in the frequent practice of waiting upon the Lord in private retirement, honestly examining yourselves as to your growth in grace, and your preparation for the life to come.

"Be diligent in the private perusal of the Holy Scriptures; and let the daily reading of them in your families be devoutly conducted.

"Be careful to make a profitable and religious use of those portions of time on

At first the Queries were formal questions asked for the sake of securing information in reference to the number of members suffering under persecution, and in reference to the "spread and increase of Truth," *i.e.* the expansion of the Society. They were for the first

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the first day of the week, which are not occupied by our Meetings for Worship.

"Live in love as Christian brethren, ready to be helpful one to another, and sympathising with each other in the trials and afflictions of life. Watch over one another for good, manifesting an earnest desire that each may possess a well-grounded hope in Christ.

"Follow peace with all men, desiring the true happiness of all. Be kind and liberal to the poor; and endeavour to promote the temporal, moral, and religious well-being of your fellow-men.

"With a tender conscience in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel, take heed to the limitations of the Spirit of Truth in the pursuit of the things of this life. Let your light shine in lives of honest industry and patient love. Do your utmost to maintain yourselves and your families in an honourable independence, and, by prudent care in time of health, to provide for sickness and old age.

"Maintain strict integrity in your transactions in trade, and in all your outward concerns. Guard against the spirit of speculation, and the snare of accumulating wealth. Remember that we must account for the mode of acquiring, as well as for the manner of using, and finally disposing of our possessions.

"Observe simplicity and moderation in your deportment and attire, in the furniture of your houses, and in your style and manner of living. Carefully maintain in your own conduct, and encourage in your families, truthfulness and sincerity; and avoid worldliness in all its forms.

"Guard watchfully against the introduction into your households of publications of a hurtful tendency; and against such companionships, indulgences, and recreations, whether for yourselves or for your children, as may in any wise interfere with a growth in grace.

"Avoid and discourage every kind of betting and gambling, and such speculation in commercial life as partakes of a gambling character.

"In view of the manifold evils arising from the use of intoxicating liquors, prayerfully consider whether your duty to God and to your neighbour does not require you to abstain from using them yourselves or offering them to others, and from having any share in their manufacture or sale.

"In contemplating the engagement of marriage, look principally to that which will help you on your heavenward journey. Pay filial regard to the judgment of your parents. Bear in mind the vast importance, in such a union, of an accordance in religious principles and practice. Ask counsel of God; desiring, above all temporal considerations, that your union may be owned and blessed of Him.

"Watch with Christian tenderness over the opening minds of your children; inure them to habits of self-restraint and filial obedience; carefully instruct them in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and seek for ability to imbue their hearts with the love of their Heavenly Father, their Redeemer, and their Sanctifier.

"Finally, dear Friends, let your whole conduct and conversation be such as become the Gospel. Exercise yourselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Be steadfast and faithful in your allegiance and service to your Lord; continue in His love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." *Christian Discipline* (Revision of 1917), part iii. pp. 39-42.

hundred years answered only once a year, to give definite information to the Yearly Meeting. "Does Truth prosper among you?" was one of the great Queries in the early days. But at the opening of the second quarter of the eighteenth century it was not possible to answer this Query with any great note of affirmation. The tide had turned and the ebb was already manifest in the answers to this question. Some meetings "hope" Truth prospers; some "wish that they could believe that it prospers"; others "fear that it loses ground rather than prospers," and a few see slight signs of "Truth's prosperity." "We humbly believe that some amongst us do prosper in the Truth" is a cautious way of stating the condition.[1] As fresh moral issues arose, and as the "testimonies" of the Society grew defined in relation to the practices of the world, the list of Queries enlarged. They grew in number and in importance until they embodied almost all the essential aspects of the Quaker moral ideal, and they furnished a kind of silent confessional for each individual member, as well as a moral measuring rule to guide the Overseers in their work of looking after the flock. Whenever a new moral issue arose and made its appeal to the minds of Friends, a few of the leaders would at first feel the "concern" to take the right action in reference to it. Then gradually the "concern" would spread and grow until a respectable nucleus of the membership was committed to it. The next stage of procedure was to formulate a Query dealing with the principle or the practice in question. The result is that the growth of the Queries gives a pretty clear revelation of the development of the moral problems of the Society.

In 1736–1737 David Hall, "a seasoned Friend" from Yorkshire, visited Irish Friends and aroused them to the importance of changing the unsatisfactory moral and spiritual condition of the general membership. His visit produced a real awakening and led to definite action toward an improvement of the Discipline. Queries that had already been in use in some individual meetings of

[1] *Minutes*, vol. viii. p. 222, and *passim*.

Great Britain were now massed together, codified, and adopted for general use in Ireland by the National Meeting in 1740. They show very clearly the disciplinary problems, as well as the moral and religious problems, which were predominant in the meetings of Friends during the first half of the eighteenth century. They were as follows:

*Query* 1. Are Meetings for Worship, both on Week-days and First-days, duly attended, as also those for Discipline? and are such as are negligent herein admonished, and is care taken that no unfit persons sit in the latter?

2. Do the larger Meetings assist and strengthen little Meetings that are near them?

3. Do Friends keep to plainness of Habit, Speech and Furniture?

4. Do they avoid superfluous Provisions at Marriages and Burials?

5. Do they avoid unnecessary frequenting of Ale-houses and Taverns?

6. Do they so manage their affairs in Trade and Dealing, as to keep their Words and Promises in the Payment of their Debts and otherwise?

7. Do Friends avoid encumbrances hindering their growth in the Truth, and the Service of it?

8. Are Friends in Unity one with another? Do they avoid Back-biting and raising or spreading evil Reports of any? Is care taken to put a speedy end to all Differences?

9. How are the several Advices of our National Meeting, and that of London put in practice, relating to Friends' godly care of the good Education of their Children in the way of Truth, Sobriety, plainness of Habit and Speech, and all godly Conversation? and do Friends instruct their Children in the Principles of Truth?

10. Are Friends' Children put to School among Friends and are the Schools of Friends duly inspected?

11. Are the Poor taken due care of, and do their Children partake of necessary Learning to fit them for Trades? Are Apprentices and Servants placed out amongst Friends?

12. Doth each Monthly Meeting take care, that a Visit to the Families of Friends be performed by well-qualified Friends, once a year, or oftener, as occasion requires?

13. Do Friends acquaint particular or Monthly Meetings, and take their Advice, before they remove from their place of Settlement?

14. Do Friends maintain their Testimony against paying or receiving Tythes, Church-Rates, and all kinds of Priests Dues, so called; as also against bearing of Arms?

15. Do any propose Marriage without first obtaining the consent of Parents or Guardians?

16. Is care taken to deal with and censure Transgressors in due time?

17. Have all Friends settled their outward Affairs, by Wills or Deeds of Trust, according to their present minds and circumstances? Is care taken that Executors, Guardians and Trustees do faithfully discharge the Trust reposed in them?

18. Are all Meeting-houses and Burial-places firmly made over and secured, and kept in good Repair?

19. Are Births and Burials duly recorded?

20. Doth each Monthly Meeting take care that none under our Profession defraud the King of his Duties, Custom or Excise, or any way encourage the running of Goods, by buying or vending such Goods; and do they severely reprehend and testify against all such Offenders, and their unwarrantable, clandestine and unlawful Actions?

21. Is care taken by each Monthly Meeting that no misuse be made of the Affirmation?[1]

London Yearly Meeting in 1755 revised and enlarged the Queries and recommended that they be answered in the future by the Monthly Meetings before each Quarterly Meeting for the purpose of finding out "the state of the Church." The Answers were now to be given when the Queries were read, and both Queries and Answers were to be "weightily considered." The committee of the Yearly Meeting appointed at this time in its report and recommendations declares that there is a "variety" of Queries in use and that "divers counties are without any."[2] In 1760 a representative committee was appointed by the Yearly Meeting with Samuel Fothergill at the head of it, to visit the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to make these subordinate meetings more efficient and to put into practice the recommendations of the Yearly Meeting in reference to "the discipline and good order of

[1] See John Rutty's *History of the People Called Quakers in Ireland* (Dublin, 1751), pp. 323-325.

[2] *Minutes*, vol. xi. p. 75. The Queries adopted at this time are also found in this same section of the *Minutes*.

the Society."[1] This Committee drafted an Epistle which the Yearly Meeting sent down to all the subordinate meetings, calling attention to the fact that the state of the Society was "at a low ebb" and pleading for a revival of life and power. This action of 1760 marks an epoch and is the beginning of a new stage in the importance of discipline. For the purpose of improving the condition of the Society the Queries were now made a potent instrument.

In the words of the above-mentioned Epistle:

> Let all our answers to this Meeting's and other Queries be plain and explicit; let a due sense of the State of the Church prevail on your Minds rather than an unwillingness to appear defective among your Brethren.[2]

The Queries as they were drawn up in 1755 were eight in number, to which a ninth was added a little later. The list used in 1760 was as follows:

1. Are the meetings for worship and discipline duly attended, and do Friends avoid all unbecoming behaviour therein?
2. Are love and unity preserved amongst you; and do you discourage all tale-bearing and detraction?
3. Is it your care, by example and precept, to train up your children in a godly conversation, and in frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, as also in plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel?
4. Do you bear a faithful and Christian testimony against the receiving or paying tithes, priests' demands, or those called church-rates?
5. Are Friends careful to avoid all vain sports, places of diversion, gaming, and all unnecessary frequenting of ale-houses or taverns, excess in drinking, and intemperance of every kind?
6. Are Friends just in their dealings, and punctual in fulfilling their engagements? and are they advised carefully to inspect the state of their affairs once in the year?
7. Is early care taken to advise and deal with such as appear inclinable to marry contrary to the rules of our Society? and do no Friends remove from or into your Monthly or Two-weeks Meetings without certificates?
8. Have you two or more faithful Friends deputed in each particular meeting, to have the oversight thereof? and is care

[1] *Minutes*, vol. xii. p. 92 and p. 103.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. xii. p. 107.

taken when anything appears amiss, that the rules of our discipline be put in practice?

9. Do you keep a record of your Monthly Meetings of the prosecutions and sufferings of your respective members? and have you a record of your meeting-houses and burial-grounds, &c.? and is due care taken to register all marriages, births, and burials? Are the titles of your meeting-houses, burial-grounds, &c., duly preserved and recorded; and are all legacies and donations properly secured, carefully recorded, and duly applied?[1]

These were to be answered by the Monthly Meeting to each Quarterly Meeting, and another list of eleven, which included one "against defrauding the king of his customs, duties and excises, or dealing in goods suspected to be run," was to be answered by the Quarterly Meeting once a year to the Yearly Meeting. In 1742, London Yearly Meeting had adopted the Query on "bearing arms" in the following words:

Do you bear a faithful and Christian testimony against the paying and receiving of tithes, and against bearing arms; and do you admonish such as are unfaithful therein?[2]

These two sets of Queries were revised and harmonized and finally amalgamated into a single uniform set for all meetings in 1791 and 1792, with provision for written Answers in the words of the Query.[3] For almost a hundred years from the above date, they were read in Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings, and the answers

[1] They are given with the Answers for London and Middlesex Q.M. for Eleventh Mo. 30th, 1761, in Beck and Ball's *London Meetings*, pp. 381-384. Query 8 shows that careful provision was made at this date for oversight.

[2] In New England this Query (the 7th) read: "Do you maintain a faithful testimony against the payment of priests' wages, bearing of arms, training, or other military matters? Against being concerned in property taken in war, buying or vending goods suspected to be run, and against making false entries to evade the payment of duties?"

[3] A proposition was sent in 1798 to London Y.M. from London and Middlesex Q.M.—"Whether it may not be expedient to direct that the Queries shall be answered less frequently than is at present the practice; which practice this Meeting apprehends to be a multiplication of business without an adequate advantage, and that the time of Monthly Meetings might be more profitably employed in considering how to remedy such defects as may be complained of." This was referred to the Epistle Committee, and by their advice deferred till next Y.M. It was then decided that the Answers to the Queries were to be omitted in the Summer Q.M., but answered by the three remaining Q.Ms. (*Minutes of London Y.M.*, vol. xix. p. 390 and p. 447).

minutely drawn up, scanned, discussed, considered, revised, until almost every member knew the Queries by heart, could forecast the answers with almost unerring precision, and everybody in the Society, except the cradle-members, lived in the moral atmosphere of these Queries as the pious Jew of Palestine lived in the atmosphere of Deuteronomy. These periodical re-examinations of conduct and inner spirit worked without question a profound result, and the system was admirably adapted, within limits, to its purpose. During the period under review—a period of low moral life in the world around—the Society of Friends attained and maintained a high level of ethical conduct in its membership, and yet it must be said that, notwithstanding the subconscious moralizing effect which this system of Queries and Answers had upon the membership at large, it was a static system of piety, and it was too legalistic to produce the highest type of ethical goodness.

The custom of answering the Queries in a formal detailed way was almost certainly a mistake. Again and again the Overseers prepared the answers to the questions, many of which were too subtle, deep, and inward to be answered outside the individual's own conscience. The Answers were read at the Monthly Meeting and forwarded to the Quarterly Meeting, where they were read again, summarized, and forwarded to the Yearly Meeting, where they were once more read and gathered into a summary. The reading of Queries and Answers and the consideration of them formed a very large part of the meeting business. It was monotonous and seldom became fresh and vital. The solemn catechizing of the membership by means of these searching questions was an admirable method of arousing individual sensitiveness, but the formulation of public answers was psychologically unsound and led to stagnation and dullness.

The hundred years from 1750 on was the creative period for the making of rules of Discipline and for the perfecting of methods of procedure. John Griffith, who was born in Wales, migrated to America in his youth, and

again settled permanently in England in 1750, became deeply convinced about this time as a result of his travels throughout all the meetings in Great Britain and Ireland that the Society was in a "low state," that discipline and order were lax, and that the glory was departing from Friends. He saw that the Society was waning, if not actually dying. His spirit was "greatly distressed." He set himself to a definite work of revival and reform, in which Samuel Fothergill, William Tuke, William Reckitt, and other Friends of vision heartily and efficiently joined. During the Yearly Meeting of 1760, as we have seen, a forward step was taken. Griffith says in his *Journal*: "The sense [of great slackness and unfaithfulness in divers places] deeply affected some minds" and a Friend, who was no doubt John Griffith himself, declared, with the tone of a prophet, that "it now behoved the meeting deeply and weightily to consider what remained to be done for the help and recovery of the Society to its ancient purity and comely order." He pointed out that the Society was plainly declining and that none of the methods so far proposed had availed to "heal the backslidings" of the people.[1] His message took hold of those who heard it. A profound concern for an increase of life was aroused. Lethargy had settled down upon the Society, Deism was prevalent,[2] laxity of morals, which characterized English life everywhere, had made its way into the Quaker fold. A genuine crisis seemed to confront the Church. These "reformers" of 1750 to 1760 believed that the great remedy for existing troubles was more and stricter Discipline. They shared the common faith of their time that "method" and "rule" would work wonders. Restricted as was the basis of this reform movement, it produced striking results and was undoubtedly the beginning of a better period for Friends.

It would seem that in proportion as the conquering missionary spirit, which marked the early days, ran low or dried up, a corresponding passion for Society rules and

[1] Griffith's *Journal*, pp. 293, 294.
[2] The nature of Deism will be considered in a later Chapter.

regulations took its place in the minds of the leaders. This eighteenth century "passion" was never so explicit and conscious as the mission of spiritual conquest had been, and yet one can hardly miss the fact that the "concerned" Friends in this medieval period expected great results to flow from the perfecting of the Discipline and from the vigorous application of the rules—somewhat, perhaps, as the zealous idealists of Jerusalem hoped that the glory of Israel would dawn if they could only succeed in getting a remnant of persons who perfectly kept the law of God.

What we now call *The Discipline*, that is the book containing the body of rules, regulations, principles, practices, advices, and queries, was a thing of slow and almost unconscious growth. Nobody wrote it outright. No individual or even committee "made" it. It was the creation of the whole group working together. The Society itself "made" it. It was formed out of the accumulations of meeting decisions. The meetings, especially, of course, the Yearly Meetings, had continually to deal with new problems of procedure, fresh questions of policy, maturing issues of moral and social import, and as fast as these matters were solved by the action of the meeting, the decision became settled practice. All that was required to make a Book of Discipline was to produce a collection of meeting decisions, expressing habitual practices, settled principles, and group-convictions. At first these accumulations were kept in written form, and later were risked in print. By the action of the London Yearly Meeting, due to a request of Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, a manuscript book was written in 1738, containing an abstract of decisions and a digest of rules "made ever since we were a people," and copies of this written book were sold to the Quarterly Meetings for fifty shillings.[1] This manuscript book was an ever-expanding

[1] It contained extracts from Minutes and from Advices, and was a real nucleus of what later came to be the Discipline. It was Barclay's opinion (*The Inner Life*, p. 527) that the preparation of this Book of Rules was "the starting-point of a new era in the history of the Society," though it seems to me hardly more than the proper normal order and development of business methods. See *Second Period*, p. 377.

affair as new Yearly Meeting decisions were made, year after year. Numerous directions for Friends' meetings were, on occasion, put into print, in tract or folio form. Rules for proceeding in relation to marriage were printed in 1754. Rules relating to the removal of Friends from their own meeting for settlement in another had been printed as early as 1729. Advices were also available in print from an early date. An important collection of Extracts was issued in 1762 by John Fry, though it was not published by official action of the Yearly Meeting.[1] It was both like and unlike the manuscript Discipline of 1738. It contained considerable fresh matter not in the original manuscript. Joseph Smith, in his *Catalogue of Friends' Books*, "calls it the original or first Book of Extracts." That statement is not quite correct. It stands between the original Book of Extracts of 1738 and the first officially printed Book of Discipline, which was issued in 1783, called *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices.*

At first no individual was allowed to possess a copy of this book of *Extracts*, but each Monthly Meeting was expected to have one for the guidance of those in authority.[2] This was reissued with additions in 1802. The movement in the direction of disciplinary regulations was well under way in America before the London

[1] The title-page states that the book is "An Alphabetical Extract of all the Annual printed EPISTLES which have been sent to the several Quarterly Meetings of the People call'd *Quakers*, in *England* and elsewhere, from their YEARLY MEETING held in *London*, for the Promotion of Peace and Love in the Society, and Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, from the year 1682 to 1762 inclusive, being eighty-one years: Containing many excellent Exhortations to Faithfulness in the several Branches of that *Christian* Testimony which God hath given them to bear; and Admonitions, occasionally given, for the Support of good Order and Regularity in and among the said People." It sold for 18d.

[2] Epistle Committee of London Y.M. recommended in 1782 that the Book of Extracts be printed at expense of Y.M. and a copy sent to each M.M. If such meetings desire, they may purchase additional copies, "which Books are to remain the property of the Meetings which have purchased them, and so to be inscribed on the cover." The Advices therein contained to "be in future observed by the respective Quarterly, Monthly, and other meetings and by the several members of our Society." *Minutes*, vol. xvii. p. 133.

"On mature deliberation" in 1784, leave is given for the *Book of Extracts* to be sold to private Friends, "and that those heretofore purchased at the expense of Individuals in the name of Monthly Meetings, may be enjoyed by such Friends as their own property." *Minutes*, vol. xvii. p. 414.

Committee of 1760 was appointed. The spirit of "reform" and the inauguration of stricter methods appear in New England by the middle of the century. Friends showed a serious concern over the tendency appearing among some of the membership to erect grave-stones in the burial-grounds of the Society, a concern which was to remain in full sway for a hundred years. When finally it proved impossible to exclude grave-stones entirely, then the question of their height and quality came to be an urgent one.[1] During the decade from 1750 to 1760 all the American Yearly Meetings were engaged in collecting manuscript Books of Rules. The Book adopted by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was not finally sent down to the Quarterly Meetings until 1762. The Minute adopted on this occasion may be taken as a sample of the usual Yearly Meeting procedure:

"The clerk acquainted the meeting," this Minute of 1762 says, "that the alphabetical collection of the Rules of Discipline and Advices given forth by this meeting from the first establishment thereof, has been compared with the original Minutes, pursuant to the direction of the meeting last year, and a number of copies for the use of the Quarterly Meetings have been transcribed and most of them examined and ready to be delivered. He is therefore desired to deliver one copy to the Clerk of each Quarterly Meeting when the necessary Minutes now agreed upon are added thereto."[2]

New England Yearly Meeting issued its first printed Discipline in 1785, two years after London had led the way, and all the American Yearly Meetings published their books at about the same time.[3] This was reissued in 1792 with additions, and then again in 1802. From that time until the present there have been a number of issues of the Discipline, not only of London Yearly Meeting, but of the American Yearly Meetings as well,

[1] During a discussion upon the grave-stone controversy one Friend pithily remarked: "The matter is of no service to the deceased."

[2] This interesting MS. book, with its minute transcribed on the fly-leaf, is in Haverford College Library.

[3] The fullest account of the development of *Friends' Book of Discipline* of London Y.M. is that given in a discriminating article by John Stephenson Rowntree in *Friends' Quarterly Examiner* for 1898, pp. 459-498.

growing in volume and in breadth of scope and outlook with the years.[1]

[1] The second printed edition of London Discipline is dated 1802 (adopted by the Y.M. in 1801). A Supplement of this volume appeared in 1822. A third edition, with a valuable introductory article written by Samuel Tuke, was published in 1834. A Supplement to this volume appeared in 1849. A fourth edition was passed by the Y.M. in 1861. The fifth was issued in 1883, and had become by this time quite a massive volume. This consists of three parts: Part I. Doctrine, which has not yet been revised, though the question of revision is now under consideration; Part II. Practice, revised in 1911; Part III. Church Government, revised in 1906 and 1917. Since this chapter was written A. Neave Brayshaw's valuable historical address on the History of London Yearly Meeting from 1725 to 1825 has appeared in the volume *London Yearly Meeting During 250 Years* (London, 1919).

## CHAPTER V

### THE "TESTIMONIES"

NOT only were Friends of the eighteenth century "peculiar" in their form of organization, their manner of worship, their care of the membership, and their type of meetings for worship and for Church affairs, but they were also "peculiar" in the maintenance of certain so-called "testimonies" in reference to which the members, or at least the most "seasoned" of them, had unalterable conscientious scruples. These "testimonies" were not new in the period which we are treating. On the contrary they go back in historical origin to the beginning of the Quaker movement, and in many cases even back to the small spiritual groups of the Reformation era; but as the consciousness that Friends were to be a "peculiar people" developed and became potent, these "testimonies" quite naturally grew in importance as distinguishing marks and badges of the Society, and, as they often involved suffering, they became winnowing tests of the real quality of the membership.

It would appear to be impossible to form and perfect "a peculiar people" in any land or in any age without insistence on certain esoteric principles and practices which are believed by the initiated to constitute a special "way" of life and holiness. This course almost inevitably involves some peculiar moral emphasis, and a transvaluation of existing moral standards. Some aspects of social conduct emerge in a new light and form a definite rallying point and challenge to the strict members of the sect or order. This tendency to react upon certain features of

the prevailing moral code of the time appears in all the bodies or societies that have professed to be "peculiar peoples," not only within the historical movement of the Christian Church, but in the pre-Christian movements as well, and also in the Buddhist, Confucian, and Mohammedan communities.[1] Customs of dress and speech, special forms of marriage and burial, and sacred rites of initiation, usually find place among those who form "peculiar peoples," but, important as are these community badges, they yet do not rise to quite the same level of interior significance as do the "testimonies," for the sake of which the members of the Society are called upon to suffer and in behalf of which they set themselves apart from the world around them. It is, too, in matters touching the "testimonies" that the most acute stage of conscience is likely to be found. Some of the Quaker "testimonies"—as, for instance, that which called for fidelity to a special form of public worship—were distinctly religious and will be considered elsewhere, but for the most part the "testimonies" had to do with conduct and social relationships and thus belong to what we usually call the moral order, though they all ran up, on the feeling side, into the religious realm. It is never possible for "a peculiar people" to give a clear, adequate, rational account of the basis of its "testimonies" or its special badges of distinction from the world. These things have very deep roots which lie far below the level of rational analysis and explanation. They have their ground in deep-lying instincts, tendencies, emotions, and sentiments, and they are generally the product of long historical processes, so that explicit explanations given for them never really explain them. This is of course true of every type of *tabu*, but it is also true of more advanced and more spiritual practices and customs in religious societies. Moral and religious "institutions" are often sound and right even when they cannot be altogether justified by

[1] The Pythagorean Society among the Greeks, and the Essenes among the Jews, are good illustrations of the tendency under consideration. See the author's article on "Peculiar Peoples" in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

argument. They are not seldom due to the unerring insight of action based upon instinctive social tendencies, though of course they must eventually prove valuable to the individual or to the group if they are to win respect and sacredness.

One of the most impressive of all Quaker "testimonies," at least in the eighteenth century, was that against the payment of tithes and church rates. There was a strong religious aspect underlying the protest of the Quakers against the forced obligation to support the existing State Church system, but a narration of the long fight against tithes belongs very properly under the head of the moral "testimonies," as it involved downright refusal to obey the existing laws of the land, and carried with it many problems of social adjustment. Year after year the annual Epistle of London Yearly Meeting exhorted the membership to bear and endure any suffering that might be involved in the maintenance of "our testimony against the anti-Christian yoke of bondage—a yoke directly contrary to the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."[1] A clear statement of the Quaker position was issued by London Y.M. in 1832, though it was only a restatement of a position held from the beginning of the Society, and the following paragraph from this official document indicates very well the ground of the long continued protest and struggle:

> We have uniformly entertained the belief, on the authority of Holy Scripture, that when, in the fulness of time, according to the allwise purposes of God, our blessed Lord and Saviour appeared personally upon earth, He introduced a dispensation pure and spiritual in its character. He taught by His own holy example and divine precepts that the ministry of the Gospel is to be without pecuniary remuneration. As the gift is free, the exercise of it is to be free also; the office is to be filled by those only who are called of God by the power of the Holy Spirit; who, in their preaching, as well as in their circumspect lives and conversation, are giving proof of this call. The forced maintenance of the ministers of Religion is, in our view, a violation of those great privileges which God in His wisdom and goodness

[1] *London Y.M. Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 220, 234, and *passim*.

bestowed upon the human race, when He sent His Son to redeem the world and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to lead and guide mankind into all truth.[1]

It was a well established principle of Friends — a principle frequently reaffirmed in their Epistles and other documents—that all members of the Society should obey the laws of the country in which they lived and be loyal to officers of government, and it was only under an overmastering sense of obligation to a higher authority that the course of passive resistance to particular laws of tithes and rates was taken. A petition of the Society, presented to Parliament in 1833, calmly and with much restraint sets forth the conscientious ground for "our established practice to refuse an active compliance with the law [in this special matter] and patiently to suffer the consequences." The grounds are given in these words:

Our reasons for refusing these payments are purely of a religious nature; and they are as follows:

First—That we regard the interference of the Civil Government in matters of Religion and private conscience, to be a usurpation of *Prerogative* which belongs only to God.

Secondly—That we consider the setting apart of Tithes, for the Maintenance of the Ministers of Religion, to have been an unwarrantable return to the provisions of the Levitical Law, and at variance with the nature and character of the Gospel.

Thirdly—That we believe the ministry of the Gospel to be free in its nature, according to the command of our Lord and Saviour to his disciples—"Freely ye have received, freely give," and that the contravention of this principle, has an unfailing tendency to convert Religion into a trade, and grievously to impede the diffusion of vital Christianity.

We also deem the compulsory support of the ministers of any Church, and of an Ecclesiastical system connected therewith, to be opposed to that liberty which the Gospel confers; and, when claimed from those who conscientiously dissent from that Church, to be a violation of the common principles of justice.[2]

The suffering entailed by this "conscientious dissent" was in large measure of a financial character, though there

[1] A Brief Statement of the Reasons why the Religious Society of Friends object to the payment of tithes, etc. Printed in *The Yorkshireman*, vol. i. no. 13, p. 193 *seq.*

[2] Printed in *The Yorkshireman*, vol. i. no. 24, pp. 375-377.

were through the years of passive resistance many cases of imprisonment and a few cases of death resulting from the hardships and exposures in the unsanitary prisons of the time. The financial losses drained away from the members an immense sum and often reduced individuals, during years of bad harvests and economic pressure, to the verge of poverty. These grave financial losses were mainly the result of *distraints*, that is to say, when conscientious Friends refused to pay the tithe, by process of law the tithe officials were empowered to "take by distress" from the recusant personal property enough to satisfy the claim. The sequestrations under this provision were often altogether disproportionate to the original demands and the reasonable costs of the distraint proceedings, so that the refusal to pay a trivial sum led in many instances to serious suffering. A petition to the House of Commons from Friends of Stroud, Rochester, and Chatham in 1833 gives an impressive illustration of the hardship and oppression which Friends suffered on this score.

"Your Petitioners," they say, "beg most respectfully to call your attention to the small parish of Stroud, where some of your Petitioners reside, and where the hardship and oppression of which they complain is strikingly apparent, and for many years has been progressing at an alarming rate.

"In this small Parish the demands for 'CHURCH RATES' alone, on members of the Society of Friends during the last forty years, and the value of goods taken from them by distraint, is as follows, viz. :

| | Amount. | Value Taken. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| From 1792–1802 . | £19 18 4 | £31 14 8 | from 5 individuals. |
| From 1802–1812 . | 37 4 9 | 59 7 6 | from 8 individuals. |
| From 1812–1822 . | 205 14 0 | 318 12 7 | from 8 individuals. |
| From 1822–1832 . | 270 16 11 | 438 15 0 | from 8 individuals."[1] |

[1] Petition printed in *The Yorkshireman*, vol. ii. no. 47, pp. 355-356.

I am subjoining a few cases of exorbitant distraints, taken from John Gough's *History of the People called Quakers*, vol. iv. pp. 293, 294.

"(*Buckinghamshire*, 1719.) Abraham Barber, Thomas Olliffe and Nicholas Larcum, were prosecuted in the Exchequer, at the suit of John Higgs, the elder, and John Higgs, the younger, tithe-farmers. The demand on Barber, Olliffe and Larcum, was but eight shillings for tithe on all three of them, and the decree of the court but for four shillings. They were all taken up by an attachment in November, 1721, and carried to Ailsbury jail. On the 20th and 22nd of October, 1722, the goods of the said Abraham Barber were seized for the whole demand and charges, viz. :

By a careful system of reports sent up from the local meetings London Yearly Meeting kept a record of the

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 Quarters and 4 bushels of Wheat . . . . | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| 16 Quarters of Malt London measure . . . | 12 | 16 | 0 |
| For a demand of 8s. . Taken | £23 | 16 | 0 |

"(Gloucestershire, 1716.) Jonathan Peasley, late of Just in the parish of Olveston, was prosecuted in the Exchequer, at the suit of Benjamin Bayly, vicar of Olveston. The vicar's demand on Jonathan Peasley was for three and a half, or four years, small tithes of about seven pounds value. He was committed to Gloucester jail, and the next term, brought up by *Habeas Corpus* to the Exchequer, and set at liberty: But the vicar soon after renewing his suit, Peasley was brought to the Exchequer again in 1717, and committed to the Fleet; and proceeded against to a *Sequestration*, by which was seized and taken from him in December, 1717,

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 Cows, 6 heifers and 3 yearlings, valued at . . . . | 77 | 0 | 0 |
| A wheat mow, a bean mow, and about 20 bushels of beans . | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 Beds, 2 Bedsteads and Bedding . . . . . | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 Sides of bacon, 10 hundred of cheese . . . . . | 13 | 5 | 0 |
| All the rest of the goods in and about the house . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Three ricks of hay . . . . . | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| £7 *per Annum* free land during his life . . . . . | 70 | 0 | 0 |
| For about £7 value Taken | £237 | 5 | 0 |

A.D. 1758. Daniel Hollis, of the Isle of Wight, dies a prisoner for tithes in Winchester Jail; having near fifty years before been in like manner imprisoned, but discharged by a general Act of grace. "In about fifty years there had been taken from him on account of tithes and offerings, by warrants of distress, corn, hay, cattle, &c., to above the value of £700, whereof about £140 was more than the total amount of all the original demands. It had been customary for constables before the year 1753, to distrain considerably more than the sum claimed for tithe, and the charges allowed by law, amounted to, which additional money the parson used to take for his pretended extra expenses; but William James, constable of the East Medine in the said island, who distrained for tithes in the year 1756, refusing to distrain any more for the parson, than what the justices had adjudged to be due him, and the charges allowed by law; with which John Gilbert the old rector of the parish of Whipingham not being satisfied, he brought an action against the said constable for what he demanded beyond the tithes and legal charges; in which suit the parish being cast, was obliged to pay the constable's costs. In the year 1753, the said John Gilbert preferred a bill in the court of Exchequer against Daniel Hollis, for tithes for one year to Michaelmas, so called, 1757, and obtaining an attachment, the son of the priest, being an attorney, together with a sheriff's officer, went to the house of the said Daniel Hollis. Daniel, by reason of his great age, was become so feeble as to be scarce able to help himself. They violently pulled him from his bed, and dragged him down stairs, whereby he was bruised; they then left him in the house. But afterwards, viz. on or about the 1st of 11th month, in the same year, he was taken out of his house and conveyed to Winchester jail, where he was at first confined in a public thoroughfare-room, very incommodious to him and his daughter, who attended him; but by the favourable influence of a Justice of the peace, who had been his Landlord, he was in a few days removed into a more commodious room; in which he was daily fed from the said justice's table. After he had been a prisoner about a month, a Supersedeas was obtained from the Court for his discharge: but when it came to the prison, he was so ill with the bruise he received when dragged down stairs, and by increase of his weakness, that he was not fit to be removed; and desired those about him not to

total amount of distraints which were laid upon the members year after year, and the sum was embodied in each annual Epistle from the London gathering. The total amount for the hundred years between 1730 and 1830 for Great Britain and Ireland reaches the great sum of seven hundred and sixty-seven thousand, six hundred and nineteen pounds sterling! The distraints for the different decades were as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1730–1739 | £43,759 |
| 1740–1749 | 46,576 |
| 1750–1759 | 45,378 |
| 1760–1769 | 50,010 |
| 1770–1779 | 54,380 |
| 1780–1789 | 57,398 |
| 1790–1799 | 81,412 |
| 1800–1809 | 100,226 |
| 1810–1819 | 146,520 |
| 1820–1829 | 141,960 |
| | £767,619[1] |

An immense amount of time was bestowed by the Meeting for Sufferings upon the multifarious problems involved in maintaining this "testimony." The tithe and rate laws were carefully watched, all unjust and oppressive distraints or prosecutions were taken up and investigated, frequent efforts were made to secure parliamentary relief, annual reports were prepared in detail from the counties of the "sufferings" endured year by year, and a thorough review of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the membership in reference to this "testimony" was made in all the meetings of the Society. This annual "review" of the membership, as reported in the official minutes, reveals the fact that the Society never succeeded in securing a complete "faithfulness" on the part of its individual members. The "seasoned" members who formed the

attempt it. And to one who offered him the use of a chariot, to carry him to Southampton, he said he had a shorter passage and should be soon at his journey's end, requesting he might not be disturbed: he said he was very easy, and having forgiven his persecutor, he in a tender resigned frame of mind departed this life in prison the 11th of 12th month, 1758, aged about 97 years." Gough, iv. 420.

[1] The figures given in the Minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings vary slightly from the above figures, but these figures are approximately correct.

spiritual remnant, who shaped the policies and ideals of the Society, and who constituted the active, working force in the Yearly Meeting and in the subordinate meetings, were unswervingly loyal to this principle of faith and were ready to suffer to the death for it, but there were many "fringe-members," or "marginal-members" who preferred always to pursue ways of least resistance. "There are some who pretend that they are not convinced that they ought not to pay them" [*i.e.* tithes], is the laconic report of the Meeting for Sufferings in 1752 of the situation in Wiltshire.[1] There is an almost perpetual repetition of phrases like the following: "Some confession of laxity is confessed as to the payment of tithes and steeple-house rates"; "Several counties confess a good deal of slackness as regards maintaining this testimony"; "Many deficient"; "Several unfaithful"; "Divers are faithful in their testimony against tithes, though many are unfaithful therein"; "Nearly all counties report some lapses"; "A great defection respecting tithes"; "Testimony maintained in weakness of faith."[2]

One significant feature of the "testimony" against tithes was its effect on Quaker migrations. As in an earlier period persecution induced Friends to sever the tie which bound them to their homes in England and Wales, and led them to make their experiment in the virgin forests of America, so the constant pressure of the tithe system, with its weight and its annoyances, caused a large number of Friends throughout the eighteenth century to seek new homes where they could secure relief from these obnoxious burdens and where they could enjoy religious freedom. Some Friends found temporary relief by moving from a parish where the ecclesiastical officials were stern and oppressive to a district where local conditions were more favourable for opponents to the tithing system. This method of changing residence was no solution of the problem, and fortunately there were Friends of the more

[1] *Minutes of Y.M.* vol. x. p. 458.

[2] See *Minutes of Y.M.* vol. vi. 49; vol. vi. 63; vol. vii. 76; vol. ix. 199; vol. xii. 220, and *passim*.

robust type who stayed where the pressure was hard and continued to fight the moral battle out to its only true finish.

With the process of time the strict nucleus of the Society made the situation ever more difficult and uncomfortable for the "slackers," and they were gradually weeded out. At first "collections" were refused from those who were unfaithful in the testimony against tithes, *i.e.* their financial contributions to the work of the Church and for the care of the poor were declined, and they were "rendered incapable to Joyn with the body of Friends in Church affairs."[1] The Queries grew ever more and more stiff and insistent in behalf of this "testimony," and the officials of meetings were steadily encouraged to deal vigorously with "offenders." In 1742 the eighth Query, as formerly stated, took definite account of this issue in the following words:

> Do you bear a faithful and Christian Testimony against the Receiving or paying Tithes, Priests' Demands, and those called Church Rates? Bearing of Arms or Paying Trophy money? And do you Admonish such as are unfaithful therein?

There were many ways of shunning the cross, and Friends who were not possessed of a sensitive conscience found evasive means of escape. On some occasions kind neighbours paid the tithes for individual Friends to save them from distress, and they in turn, out of Christian love, could do no less than restore to these neighbours what they had generously expended. This "shun-pike" method was, however, not approved by those who were "savoury" and "concerned" members. Sometimes

[1] *Minutes of Y.M.* vol. vi. p. 23, also vol. viii. p. 331. The interesting Minute adopted by the Y.M. in 1737 reads as follows: "As some Reproach and Scandal have been brought upon our Religious Society by some bearing our Name falling short of answering their just Debts, and others professing with us being unfaithful in bearing a Testimony against the Anti-Christian yoke of Tythes, notwithstanding the several wholesome Advices given from this Meeting to the contrary: We declare it to be the Sense and Judgment of this Meeting that no person who shall fail as aforesaid Ought to be admitted to act in Meetings for Business or Joyn with Friends in collecting for the Poor and the Service of the Church until they have made Satisfaction to the Monthly Meetings to which they belong, and done what lays in their Power to take off the Reproach they have by their Imprudent Conduct brought on our Christian Principles," vol. viii. p. 331.

persons who owed money to Friends would pay the amount to a church-warden and then quietly arrange with the Friend in question to consider the debt paid. This course, again, was not approved by the scrupulous members. Such entries as the following in the minutes indicate the strict attitude of the general body:

> Friends are generally clear in their Testimony against the payment of Tithes, . . . yet we fear some too easily admit of Stoppages and other evasive means of satisfying those anti-Christian demands.[1]

It was in the middle of the eighteenth century that the voluminous account of Quaker sufferings on behalf of Truth was given to the world. This was Joseph Besse's *Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*, published in 1753. Besse had been long engaged on his task of compiling the facts of Quaker sufferings before he issued his remarkable volumes. The period covered was from the rise of the Society to the passing of the Toleration Act —1650–1689—and included sufferings on account of all "testimonies," sufferings for tithes occupying an important place in the long, tragic story of thirteen hundred pages. Toward the end of the eighteenth century weakness, unfaithfulness, and methods of dodging were less and less tolerated, and a positive minute of London Y.M. in 1796 declares that Meetings for Discipline should proceed to disown "irreclaimable delinquents" in matters of tithes and rates.

In 1837 the Tithe Commutation Act changed church tithes to rent-charges, and fixed the liability to tax upon the land instead of upon the produce of the land. The Yearly Meeting decided that, under the altered circumstances, if the rent-charge did not go to the immediate support of the clergy, or if the rent-charge were included by the landlord in the general annual rent, and the landlord thereby became responsible for the clerical claims, Friends were free to pay it, but where a Friend held land subject to a direct rent-charge he was

[1] *Minutes of Y.M.* vol. xii. p. 390. "Stoppages" refer to debts, as explained above.

called upon by his meeting to refuse payment and to suffer distraint. In 1841 there was much consideration given in London Yearly Meeting to the ancient "testimony" against tithes, and a determined effort was made to rouse the whole body of Friends to stand their ground.

"We feel bound," the Epistle of that year says, "to press upon all our Friends the plain and obvious duty of supporting the testimony in reference to the substituted charge [the direct rent-charge] with the like faithfulness and consistency, and with the like straightforwardness as have marked the maintenance of it in reference to the impost in its original shape."[1]

In *An Account of Distraints* issued by the Meeting for Sufferings in 1841 the position of Friends is very well stated:

The testimony of Friends to the supreme authority of Christ in his Church, and against the usurpation by man of power over the conscience of his fellow-man in the things of religion has, from the origin of the Society, rested solely on religious grounds, and it is our desire that we may continue to be enabled to bear it faithfully and unflinchingly in a patient Christian spirit.

In 1873 Friends were so nearly freed from the yoke of ecclesiastical charges that they discontinued the annual returns of distraints, and removed from the Queries and Advices references to tithes and rent-charges,[2] merely declaring that they are "concerned to bear a consistent testimony against all Ecclesiastical usurpation and assumption."

If we test the importance of the Quaker "testimonies" by the measure of the suffering which they involved on the part of the membership, then the "testimony" against war obviously comes next to that against tithes. It was in a more unique sense a badge of peculiarity than was the protest against tithes. In the latter cause the Quakers had the sympathy at least of all Nonconformists, but in this other course they were solitary and alone—in a very real sense "peculiar." The spiritual reformers of the

[1] *Epistles*, vol. ii. p. 303.

[2] The legislative Acts having to do with Tithes and Tithe-Rents are given in Davis, *Digest of Legislative Enactments relating to the Society of Friends* (2nd ed.), pp. 56-81. For Tithes in America, see *Quakers in Am. Colonies.*

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had arrived at an apostolic type of Christianity which allowed no place at all for war, and George Fox had risen by a leap of experience to the full height of this apostolic ideal. The Society which he founded and guided was a bold experiment of absolute faith in the constructive power of love. These Children of Light proposed to reorganize the social order not by revolution but by the actual practice of the gospel of Christ as a way of life for this present world. They never undertook to work out in any scientific way the social and economic principles involved in their programme. They naïvely trusted the central truths of the New Testament, backed up as they were by their own fresh interior discoveries of the present Christ, and they swung clear away from the old compromising theory of life, and determined to see what would happen if these truths of the Gospel were seriously put into operation. In the early stages of the movement Quakerism was not so much a "testimony" against war as the proclamation and exhibition of a kind of Christianity that risked everything on the venture of the conquering power of love. It was a type of life which eliminated war because it eliminated hate, and it was clear that if the world came to this way of living wars were forever done. But the world did *not* come to this way of living, and in the eighteenth century it seemed settled that the Quakers were destined to live on in a world which was at variance with their cherished ideals. They were to be, they concluded, a "spiritual remnant" in the midst of the world, commissioned to be the bearers of truths and ideals for which this world was not ready. Not being able to put their truth into living operation on a great scale, as they had hoped, they had to resort to the feebler and more limited way of bearing their peculiar "testimony" against the wickedness and inhumanity of war.

At first this "testimony" did not "cost" heavily. Suffering came upon them mainly for other reasons. But little by little the obligations attaching to war began to

fall upon them, both in Great Britain and in the colonies, as organic parts of the nation and they had to taste the difficulties of maintaining this peculiar ethical ideal. As the Quaker position developed, it became a settled principle of faith that a Friend could not fight in any kind of warfare, could not take any part in the preparation for war or in the furtherance of it, and could not pay his money toward the direct support of war. All these attitudes involved from time to time very real, and sometimes tragic suffering. Whenever and wherever anything like forced conscription came into operation, Friends were bound to have hard and bitter things to endure, and they were sure of martyrdoms. They could relieve their consciences where taxes were imposed for general purposes and war-budgets were lumped in with other government expenditures, but whenever a tax was collected solely for military purposes the Friends resisted it as they did tithes and suffered "distraints for war."

In 1758 "the testimony against bearing arms" was enlarged and made a separate Query, to make it more emphatic and impressive.[1] Some Friends failed to live up to the difficult standard, as the following report for 1760, which is typical, indicates:

> We are sorrowfully affected to find by the Answers to the Queries that some Friends in a few counties have failed in the maintenance of our Christian Testimony against Warrs & fightings by joyning with others to hire Substitutes and by the payment of money to exempt themselves from personal service in the Militia.[2]

And some of the city Friends appear to have fallen in with the contagious spirit of joy over victories, or at least to have been afraid of popular sentiment, and they "conformed," too, with the signs of public grief on the occasion of defeat, as this interesting Minute of 1762 shows:

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[1] This Query read as follows: "Do you bear a faithful testimony against bearing arms or paying Trophy Money, or being any way concerned in privateers, letters of marque, or dealing in prize goods." *Minutes*, vol. xi. p. 369.

[2] *Minutes of London Y.M.* vol. xii. p. 105.

In regard to the Militia we Find our Religious Testimony not sufficiently supported, some we fear contributing to the Hire of substitutes for that purpose and too many concur with others in giving publick Testimony of Joy upon the devastations of War & other occasions by illuminating their windows on those so-called rejoicing nights as also by keeping their Shops Shut on occasion of Publick Fasts.[1]

A Committee of London Yearly Meeting appointed in 1762 to consider the "Militia Act" reported that in their view Friends cannot consistently pay the rate of assessment imposed on counties which do not raise required Militia, nor that for payment of Volunteers or Militia men. Friends in office should inform authorities of their view, in the hope that officers who are not Friends may be employed in the business. Friends are advised to try to obtain exemption from holding the office of constable, since they cannot consistently do what the law requires of constables. They are to be on their guard against "mixed rates," which are illegal. They are not to give "occasion for Reproach by any unjustifiable endeavours to Evade or Elude the Law," and they must suffer patiently so as to manifest "that their scruples are real and sincere."[2]

One of the most questionable and inconsistent actions which Friends of the eighteenth century took was the adulatory address of the Yearly Meeting in 1746, signed by two hundred and forty-six prominent Friends, and presented to George II., which expressed their joy over the defeat of the "pretender and those who were desperately engaged in open rebellion against thy Person and Government," and their satisfaction at "this signal instance of divine favour" in the "deliverance of these kingdoms from the late impending dangers."[3]

As far as possible the meetings of the Society got behind the individuals who were called upon to suffer and made the sufferings for this "testimony" corporate

[1] Report of Y.M. Visiting Committee on the State of Society in London and Middlesex in *Y.M. Minutes*, vol. xii. p. 378.

[2] *Minutes of London Y.M.* vol. xii. pp. 403-405.

[3] This Address is in the *Minutes* for 1746, vol. ix. pp. 439-441.

sufferings. The result was that through suffering together, the serious and earnest members of the Society became almost a unit in their idealistic position. As in the case of other "testimonies," Friends found it extremely difficult to "rationalize" their attitude toward war, to think it through and to ground it on a bed-rock of logic. But by a "feeling-sense," as sure as the bird's sense of direction when the time for migration comes, they *saw* that their type of Christianity was absolutely incompatible with war, and in the strength of that vision they took their stand to live or to die. The corporate attitude was far more impressive and far more valuable than was any argument which they succeeded in formulating. Still more impressive and still more valuable for the lessons it gave to the world was the "holy experiment" which the Quakers, in the first half of the eighteenth century, worked out in Pennsylvania.[1]

Throughout the eighteenth century the Quaker "peace literature" never rose to any high degree of power. Anthony Benezet's Tract on *The Plainness and innocent Simplicity of the Christian Religion, with its salutary Effects compared to the corrupting Nature and dreadful Effects of War*, published in 1800, is one of the most successful of the many attempts to explain the Quaker position. This noble American philanthropist adduces many sound reasons for pacific methods. He calls even at that early date for the application of "democratic control." He insists that it is better for a nation to learn how to govern *properly* what it already possesses than to be wrenching territory by force from other states, and he gives a very good account of the central idea of the Quaker testimony:

> There is a remnant . . . who remain unshakenly convinced that the voice of reason, the feelings of humanity, and more especially the gospel of Jesus Christ, call upon them to bear a uniform testimony against *everything which is inconsistent with*

[1] This "experiment" is studied at length in *The Quakers in the American Colonies*. The part which Friends took in the government of Rhode Island in periods of war is also told in that volume.

*that patience and love which the gospel proposes.* . . . They can in no wise support that spirit which gives life to war in any of its branches, but apprehend themselves uniformly called to promote, to the utmost of their power, the welfare of all men.[1]

More impressive, however, than any document was the living exhibition of the Quaker faith in the terrible testing time of the Irish "Uprising" of 1798. This uprising, which occurred at a moment when English affairs on sea and land were in a critical state, aimed somewhat recklessly and confusedly at securing Irish liberty, religious control and revenge for years of tyranny and oppression. The uprising was fierce and fanatical and for a short period a state of real terror prevailed in certain sections of Ireland, during which the members of the Society of Friends were at the mercy alternately of the insurgents and their conquerors, who were driven to a pitch of ruthlessness and fury. Fortunately the National Friends' Meeting of 1796, on a recommendation from the Quarterly Meetings, had appealed to all its members who possessed guns or other weapons in their houses to destroy them in order to "prevent their being made use of to the destruction of any of our fellow-creatures—and more fully and clearly to support our peaceable and christian testimony in these perilous times." Those Friends who did not follow this advice were disowned, and consequently before the storm broke all Friends' houses were purged of death-dealing weapons, and when a public search of houses was ordered by the insurgents to discover where weapons were concealed, Friends were found to be entirely defenceless.

Friends' homes were alternately refuges in the first stages for hunted protestants and in the second period for the defeated insurgents and their families. There was throughout the whole tragic contest an amazing degree of bravery and calm faith in God on the part of the Quakers—no finer exhibition of Quaker faith perhaps

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 20. An almost equally able and penetrating Tract was written by John Scott and published in London in 1796 with the title *War inconsistent with the Doctrine and example of Jesus Christ.*

existing anywhere. It was a peculiar test of faith for Friends to go on attending their meetings in the midst of awful danger and destruction. It was precarious enough at home, but it was more precarious still to travel the roads, to leave all property behind unguarded, and to assemble to worship in ways at variance with that approved by the impassioned insurgents. The Friends, however, did not hesitate. They felt the call of this duty and they obeyed. They were often deprived of their horses on the way, but, in such cases, they completed the journey on foot. Nearly every family of Friends in the regions affected by the uprising was put in jeopardy, some of them many times, but no Friend wavered when the crucial test came, and no Friend, at least no full-fledged Friend, lost his life. One young man who had been a Friend put on a uniform, took arms and joined the military force. He was killed, and he was the only person that could be called a Quaker who lost his life in the entire uprising. Whenever a house was left standing unburned or unsacked, the observer of it was accustomed to say, "That doubtless is the house of a Quaker." The Shackletons of Ballitore, in the county of Kildare, were continually exposed to peril and they passed through many harrowing experiences. Mary Leadbeater, married daughter of Richard Shackleton, in her interesting *Annals of Ballitore*, gives many instances of family heroism and of almost miraculous escapes. I will give one or two narratives as samples:

A man afterwards came, with a horse-pistol in his hand, to take my husband. My brother had been previously taken, together with some of his guests. They were all to be brought to the camp in the hollow side of the hill at the east, and when the soldiers came, they should be placed, the insurgents said, in front of the battle, to stop a bullet if they would not fire one. This man, not finding my husband below, and thinking he was concealed, ran upstairs where our little children were in bed, with the huge pistol in his hand, swearing horribly that he would send the contents of it through his head if he did not go with him. I stood at the door, less terrified than I could have expected, and asked a young man who had accompanied the other if they

meant to kill us. "To kill you?" he repeated, in a tone expressive of surprise and sorrow at such a supposition. At length he prevailed on his angry companion to go away, threatening as he went, that if the Quakers did not take up arms their houses should be in flames. . . . My husband having been visiting my mother, was not found, and did not know he had been sought for. Many came to us weeping and trembling for their friends; and to the doctor, who, having much influence with the people, exerted it to do them good. We could do nothing.

Every one seemed to think that safety and security were to be found in my brother's house [Abraham Shackleton]. Thither the insurgents brought their prisoners, and thither, also, their own wounded and suffering comrades. It was an awful sight to behold in that large parlour such a mingled assembly of throbbing, anxious hearts—my brother's own family, silent tears rolling down their faces, the wives of the loyal officers, the wives of the soldiers, the wives and daughters of the insurgents, the numerous guests, the prisoners, the trembling women—all dreading to see the door open, lest some new distress, some fresh announcement of horrors should enter. It was awful; but every scene was now awful, and we knew not what a day might bring forth.

All our houses were thronged with people seeking refreshment and repose, and threatening to take possession for the purpose of firing upon the soldiery when they should come. Ours seemed peculiarly adapted for such a purpose, being a corner house, and in a central situation; so, believing its destruction was inevitable, I packed up in a small trunk such portable articles as I esteemed of most value, amongst which were some of my dear friends' letters, and made packages of clothes for my husband, myself, and the little ones.

Soldiers came in for milk; some of their countenances were pale with anger, and they grinned at me, calling me names which I had never heard before. They said I had poisoned the milk which I gave them, and desired me to drink some, which I did with much indignation. Others were civil, and one enquired if we had had any United Irishmen in the house. I told them we had. In that fearful time the least equivocation, the least deception appeared to me to be fraught with danger. The soldier continued his enquiry—"Had they plundered us?" "No, except of eating and drinking." "On free quarters," he replied, smiled, and went away.

A fine-looking man, a soldier, came in, in an extravagant

passion; neither his age nor my terror could prevent me from observing that this man was strikingly handsome; he asked me the same question in the same terms—and I made the same answer. He cursed me with great bitterness, and raising his musket presented it to my breast. I desired him not to shoot me. It seemed as if he had the will, but not the power to do so. He turned from me, dashed pans and jugs off the kitchen table with his musket, and shattered the kitchen window.[1]

Through all the welter and turmoil of these terrible days Abraham Shackleton continued to shelter the wounded and the hunted, sometimes having a hundred in his house at one time, and he performed herculean labours to prevent slaughter and destruction of property. The influence of the peaceful Irish Quakers, and the mercy and restraint shown toward them on both sides at a time when all humane sentiment seemed lost, speaks more loudly than words can in behalf of the worth and effectiveness of a pure and unflinching devotion to a way of life which through the spirit of patient love does away with the occasion for war.[2]

The annual Epistles from London Yearly Meeting and other important official documents both in England and America very frequently essayed the task of re-interpreting the peace-testimony, but seldom with much freshness or penetrating insight. These documents voice the "weighty concern that our ancient and honourable testimony against bearing arms be maintained," or they reaffirm the view that this "testimony" is "agreeable to the nature and design of the Christian religion and to the universal love and grace of God," but the Friends of this period lacked the gift which makes words strike home with an unescapable power. They did, however, at any rate raise their own membership to a rare and unusual pitch of confidence in the might of spiritual weapons, and even in the hard lean years of world-war at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth

[1] *Annals of Ballitore* (London, 1862), pp. 223-226.

[2] The story of Friends' experiences in this uprising is told in Thomas Hancock's *The Principles of Peace, exemplified in the Conduct of the Society of Friends in Ireland during the Rebellion in the Year 1798* (London, 1825). There are many editions of this book.

they won from the English nation tokens of respect and privilege. The London Epistles of 1804 and 1805 contain good specimens of the kind of messages on which the members were fed through the years of the Napoleonic struggle, and perhaps even yet the reader can feel a certain throb of reality in these passages:

Friends, it is an awful thing to stand forth to the nation as the advocates of inviolable peace; and our testimony loses its efficacy in proportion to the want of consistency in any. And we think we are at this time peculiarly called to let our light shine with clearness, on account of the lenity shown us by government, and the readiness of magistrates to afford us all legal relief under suffering. And we can serve our country in no way more availingly, nor more acceptably to Him who holds its prosperity at his disposal, than by contributing, all that in us lies, to increase the number of meek, humble, and self-denying Christians.[1]

Friends, seek peace and pursue it. Ye are called to love. O, that the smallest germ of enmity might be eradicated from our enclosure! And verily there is a soil in which it cannot live; but naturally withers and dies. This soil is Christian humility: a state highly becoming, and indispensable, for a being who depends continually on the favour of his Lord; a state in which of all others he can most acceptably approach his presence; and a state which naturally conducts frail man to love and compassion for the companions of his frailty and poverty, yet his fellow-partakers of the offered riches of the gospel.[2]

Feeble as it was, the Quaker peace-testimony turned out to be with the development of the years one of the greatest contributions of Quakerism. The Society may have failed in its attempts to tell *why* it was right in its refusal to countenance war in any shape or degree. It may have rested too heavily on Scripture texts as its support. It may not have contributed very weightily to the philosophy or the ethics of peace. But it did something better. It gave the world, as a living object-lesson, the exhibition of a coherent body of Christians who, generation after generation, staked their lives and fortunes on the absolute reality and worth of love as a working principle of social relations; who believed that the

[1] *Epistles*, vol. ii. p. 124. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 129.

kingdom of God as Christ proclaimed it should be put into operation here and now and practised with seriousness and sincerity; and who were determined to test out that way of life in all its bearings and implications, whether, here in the temporal order, it led to survival or to annihilation. It is never easy to account for the origin of moral vision, nor is it easy to explain why peculiar moral insights which lead to collision with existing standards are so coercive and august. But when they break forth and become incarnate in a seasoned group of persons and are wrought out into the tissue of life and prove their worth, there is always a strong presumption established that they are in some way grounded in the eternal nature of things. The conviction of the Quakers in the matter of peace and the behaviour which flowed out of the conviction in time worked results which the Friends of the eighteenth century could not have forecast or calculated.[1]

The Quaker "testimony against oaths" was another instance of sure spiritual insight and of right leading, though in this matter, again, the efforts to explain the "testimony" were often "muddled." The religious opposition to any kind of oath was a long-standing attitude. It was a fundamental tenet of the strict Waldenses, who would die before they would swear, and the deep-seated feeling that an oath was unchristian was intensely alive in most of the small spiritual sects of the Reformation. The early Friends inherited it as an unanalysed inner attitude and staked their lives and goods upon it. In fact, it was the most "costly" of all "testimonies" in the first period, because Justices could always catch a Friend, no matter what the charge against him might be, by "tendering the oath" to him. As he would not take the oath he could be flung into jail for an indefinite period. At the period of the Toleration Act Friends received a temporary relief, and in 1715 the privilege of affirmation was renewed by Parliament without limitation of time;

[1] In a later chapter I shall deal with the Peace work of Friends in the nineteenth century.

but this earliest form of affirmation did not satisfy the consciences of "tender Friends," who thought it too much like an oath, and a vigorous agitation was still kept up for an "easier form" of affirmation. This "easier form" was granted in 1722, by which Friends were allowed, instead of taking an oath, to say, "I, A. B., do solemnly and sincerely and truly declare and affirm."[1]

The privilege of affirmation was further confirmed by Act of Parliament in 1749 (22 George II.), and the affirmation was now made to operate with the same force as an oath in all cases, "except criminal cases, to serve on juries or to bear any office or place of profit in the government." The Act provided that

> . . . all persons who are or shall be authorized or required to administer such oath, shall be, and are hereby, authorized and required to administer the said affirmation or declaration; and the said solemn affirmation or declaration, so made as aforesaid, shall be adjudged and taken, and is hereby enacted and declared to be of the same force and effect, to all intents and purposes, in all courts of justice and other places, where by law an oath is or shall be allowed, authorized, directed or required, as if such Quaker had taken an oath in usual form.[2]

The final achievement of full liberty in this matter was reached in 1833, when an Act of Parliament abolished the exceptions and declared that

> . . . every person of the persuasion of the people called Quakers . . . be permitted to make his or her solemn affirmation or declaration, instead of taking an oath, in all places and for all purposes whatsoever where an oath is or shall be required.[3]

When the call for suffering on behalf of this "testimony" was over, Friends found themselves confronted with the perpetual task of keeping the individual members alive to the obligations of the privilege. "Tender cautions" and "advices of encouragement" were periodically issued so that "the young people might be acquainted with the

[1] *Second Period of Quakerism*, chap. vii.
[2] Davis, *Digest of Legislative Enactments relating to the Society of Friends* (Bristol, 1820), pp. 37-39.
[3] Act of 3 and 4 of William IV. c. 49.

good order of our Society," and might be "well inclined and grow up in the understanding of their duty." These "tender cautions" and "advices" do not deal very penetratingly or adequately with the principle involved in this "testimony." The stock argument is the positive command of Scripture, but occasionally there breaks through the verbiage a clear comprehension of the central principle that Friends proposed to live a daily life of truth, integrity and sincerity, and they could not consent to imply that they followed one standard on some rare occasions and another standard on the common level of life. On this ground some sensitive members hesitated to take even an affirmation, as it marked off one statement of truth from the ordinary words of daily conversation. Throughout the whole history of this "testimony," Friends, at least in substance, reiterated the contention that a judicial oath involved an imprecation which no man who clearly saw its meaning ought to take, and that, on the other hand, if it were taken carelessly and with no real sense of its meaning, the oath was a dead and deadening form of professedly sacred and holy matters which ought not to be encouraged. This "testimony" has remained until the present day an unswerving Quaker attitude.

The "testimony against hat-honour" does not stand on the same solid ground of fundamental principle as appears to be the case with those "testimonies" treated above. "When the Lord sent me forth into the world," Fox says, "He forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low."[1] This was presumably a part of Fox's central resolve to be *sincere*, and to refuse to conform to hollow and conventional etiquette, though there can be, I think, little doubt that Fox here as in other matters subconsciously took over and made a part of his own spiritual system an "attitude" which had a long history. However he came upon it, it was a "testimony" which cost immense suffering, and it became from the very first a sure mark and badge of Quaker faith and fidelity. The "testimony" widened out and soon included a refusal to

[1] *Journal*, i. p. 38.

remove the hat not only for purposes of casual salutation but even in the presence of magistrates or rulers, and it also came to include a refusal to uncover the head in places supposed to be peculiarly sacred, such as cathedrals, churches and meeting-places. Throughout the century with which I am dealing in this chapter, "consistent" Friends made a strict point of retaining the hat on the head wherever there was any conceivable ground for retaining it. To the external observer of their customs this retention of the hat was their most curious and "peculiar" badge. In all public places the men of the Society remained covered. In the presence of the most august personages they wore their hats with as much unconcern as they could muster. They always entered their own places of worship with hats on, and sat covered until some one offered prayer, or until one after another they individually felt a moving of liberty to remove the hat for personal comfort. There can be no doubt that this strange and unrationalized custom proved to be a "hedge" which kept the members from the world, or that it was a strenuous test of their quality of fidelity, but at the same time it must be admitted that, except as a mark and badge of a "peculiar people," this "testimony" possessed little real spiritual value.[1]

[1] W. C. Braithwaite regards the testimonies as possessing a higher value than my account recognizes. See his *Beginnings of Quakerism*, pp. 47, 49, and *passim*.

# CHAPTER VI

## MEMORABLE QUAKER CUSTOMS

A RELIGIOUS body that is possessed with the conviction of being a "peculiar people" accumulates and preserves, as we have seen, many odd and curious customs. They are marks and badges of its "peculiarity." They differentiate it from other religious bodies and from the world. They are usually assumed to have a divine sanction and are supposed to have been adopted as a result of a revelation. They strongly tend to unify and weld a group together into a corporate life of its own. They form unconscious loyalty, and they promote that *group-spirit* without which no religious body can long survive and maintain its activities. The moment a unique custom is felt to be *sacred*, *i.e.* to be a badge or standard which testifies that the body possessing it is in a peculiar relation to God, its influence on the membership becomes very great, and it accomplishes what no amount of reasonable persuasion would do. It becomes a "hedge" or barrier against the external influences of the environment, and it becomes, too, an unconscious organizing and binding force within the circle of members. Family usage in the home quickly gives to custom a force almost like that of instinct. If it is always practised no one asks why it is practised, any more, as William James would say, than one asks why we face toward the middle of the room when we sit down instead of facing the wall. We speculate and ask questions about customs only when they are beginning to die out and lose their primitive vitality, and then we insist that they shall exhibit rational significance or go.

The Society of Friends throughout a long period of its life was historically a body of the "peculiar people" type, and it had a large number of customs which marked and characterized its corporate life. Some of the essential badges of its faith—what it called its "testimonies"—I have already considered in the preceding chapter. I shall treat here of some of the less essential customs that either belonged to the original movement or grew up with its progress, and which exercised a distinct influence upon its unique character as a religious body, and upon its place in the world. It is impossible to follow with intelligent comprehension the course and direction of Quaker history unless one has a knowledge of these deep-lying attitudes and customs which, throughout all these years, formed the background of life and the springs of action for almost all members of the Society. I am not concerned now to discuss the intrinsic value of these unique Quaker habits; I am only aiming to point out and describe the historical facts themselves as essential aspects of eighteenth-century Quakerism. They may seem very trivial and unimportant as compared with Frederick the Great's victories of the same period, or with the capture of Quebec, but, nevertheless, if the Quaker movement itself is a significant religious phenomenon it is worth while to study the customs which seemed of vital importance to its leaders a hundred years ago.

The custom of using the singular pronoun when one person was addressed goes back to the beginning of the Society, but the importance of the custom increased with time. The reasons adduced for it in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are never adequate to explain its use. It was said to be the language of the Bible and of prayer, but that was surely an afterthought and not the original reason for its use. It was believed by some —certainly never more than a few—to have been the language of Eden and to be the language of Heaven, but the *proofs* of this were wanting. It was claimed to be the grammatically correct form of speech, but Friends frequently failed to use it correctly, and in any case

grammar must more or less conform to universal speech, and it must be granted that polite English speech, except for Friends, applied "you" to a single person.[1]

It was in vain that one tried to rationalize the custom of "plain speech." It was not used for any of the reasons given. It was a badge. It was a hedge. It differentiated Friends. It separated them from the world and it bound them together into a peculiar unity. The "thou-speakers" belonged together in a bond that firmly held. The form of language always used at home and in all circles of Friendly intercourse quickly passed by unconscious imitation into the speech of the child. As Friends made a major point of having schools of their own in which "plain language" always prevailed, the custom almost invariably became an effortless habit with the Quaker youth. To say "you" to one person was felt to exhibit all the perversity of swearing. A good typical instance of the arguments used to persuade young Friends to faithfulness can be found in Dr. John Rutty's Tract on *The Liberty of the Spirit and of the Flesh Distinguished* (1756):

> Another strong instance of the despotic sway of that Idol, *Fashion*, and than which no stronger can hardly be given, is that absurd Innovation in our language which now almost universally prevails, *viz.* that no single person must be accosted but by a term originally and properly expressive of more than One; so that, as the Edicts of Princes are commonly given forth in the first person plural, in the terms, *We* command, and *Our* royal pleasure is, *&c.*, the like air of grandeur must also be transferred to private persons, in the use of the second person Plural, instead of the second person Singular; and so far established is this Custom in this age of boasted politeness, that he who dares to decline it, is liable to be deemed either a meer Clown, or ridiculously squeamish and superstitious.
>
> And indeed, I make no scruple of acknowledging, that the Custom of the country we live in, where it neither clashes with the rules of good Sense nor Virtue, ought scarcely to be departed from, and that affected Singularities in speech or manners are

[1] Friends, especially in America, very commonly used "thee" as a nominative, and not infrequently used a plural verb with it. John G. Whittier uniformly said, for example, "Do thee think?" "How are thee?"

rather an evidence of Pride than of christian virtue: But if the Custom be such as does not answer the just ends of speech, but tends to introduce Ambiguity or Confusion into our Language, or if it has been not only introduced originally, but is still supported by the pride and vanity of man, then the declining of such a Custom from such a persuasion, becomes an instance of Self-denial and christian Courage, even in daring to oppose the established Fashion of a mistaken and depraved Age.

Now that this is really the case with respect to the use of the word *You*, as applied to a single person, is evident from the Confusion of the singular and plural number thereby made, and its tendency to rob our Language of the Pronouns *Thou* and *Thee*, peculiarly and distinguishingly expressive of the singular Number, whilst the word *You* is equivocal, and according to the modern corruption, equally applicable to *One*, and to more than one, a licentiousness of Speech inconsistent with the design thereof:

And moreover, that this Corruption of Speech hath been supported by the Pride of vain man, appears from the rough and harsh treatment our Forefathers at first met with, on account of their adherence to the use of the words *Thou* and *Thee*, whilst at the same time it was universally acknowledged that the use of those words was most consistent with the awful Solemnity and Reverence proper to our Addresses to Almighty God.[1]

How seriously concerned Friends took these matters can be seen from the following extract taken from *An Epistle of Love and Caution*, written in 1747 by David Hall:[2]

I have here also further to add, and recommend to the serious Consideration and Animadversion of all you *Parents*, *Elders*, and *Ministers*, together with all the *School-masters* and *School-mistresses* within the pale of our Society, that afflicting Case of the Growth of Pride, Gaiety, and unbecoming Conformity to the vain World in *Apparel*, *Dialect*, and *Deportment*, which *seem to spread and gain Ground* amongst the Professors of the blessed Truth at this Day, to the inexpressible Grief of the Faithful, and great Reproach of the Society in general: whereby the Mouths of many of other Communions, who have their Eyes upon us, observing the Extent of our religious Principles and Pretensions, make their Remarks on our *Conduct* and *Appearance*, and are

[1] *The Liberty of the Spirit and of the Flesh Distinguished*, sect. iv. pp. 57-59.

[2] Pp. 18, 19 of the Dublin Edition. It was first published in London in 1748 and often reprinted. The italics are in the original copy.

ready to say to this Effect: *Ye were once a plain People, distinguishable in divers Respects, particularly in* Plainness *of* Habit, *and* Speech, *from all others; but we now can scarce know you to be of the* Community *of the* Quakers, *who at the first were very remarkable in their religious Conduct, for their* Humility, Plainness *in* Apparel *and* Expression, Simplicity, Sobriety, Gravity, *and* Self-denial; *but now, what Conformity to the* Fashions, Customs, Grandeur, *and* Vanities *of the World, are you run and running into, whilst under the Profession of the* Guidance of the Spirit? *You are coming over to us apace.* Oh! therefore, I call upon you in a particular and most fervent Manner, begging you for the Lord's Sake, and the Sake of the rising Generation, to lend your helping Hand, and be heartily and jointly concerned for the redressing and suppressing those reproachful Grievances, so absurdly inconsistent with the pure, plain and honourable Principle of Truth we profess.

The insistence upon plainness of dress and apparel was even more emphatic, if possible, than upon the use of "plain" speech. The Quaker garb bore its silent testimony even when no words were spoken. The collarless coat, the sober drab, the beaver hat, the bonnet and shawl, marked the wearer at once as "peculiar," in the popular sense, and in the more inward and intimate sense of "peculiar" as belonging to a group set apart from all other people, and dedicated to a definite interpretation of truth and life. Each time the Queries were read and considered the dear young Friends were told of the vital importance of faithfulness to the plain and simple way of Truth. The Philadelphia *Discipline* presents the issue in the accustomed manner of the time, and the passage quoted below enables the reader to imagine the usual form of the messages to the young Friends in the various meetings of the Society:

It is advised that all Friends, both old and young, keep out of the world's corrupt language, manners, vain and needless things, fashions in apparel, buildings and furniture of houses. . . . We tenderly exhort all, seriously to consider the plainness and simplicity which the gospel enjoins, and to manifest the same in their speech, apparel, furniture, salutations and conversation into which our forefathers were led by the spirit of Christ, in conformity with his precepts and example; and for which they

patiently suffered long imprisonments and great persecutions; being convinced that it was their duty thus to bear a testimony against the vain spirit of the world.

We also tenderly advise, that Friends take heed, especially those who should be exemplary to others under their care, that they exercise plainness of speech without respect of persons in all their converse among men; and not balk their testimony by a cowardly compliance, varying their language according to their company.[1]

Many of the appeals to "plainness" call for the maintenance of the Quaker custom as the surest way to avoid "those gaieties which tend to divert and alienate the mind from the simplicity and gravity of the Truth" and as a garrison against "fashion-mongers." David Hall, "not out of ill nature, but in that love that wishes well to all," gives a list of some of the fashions that are

. . . making Breaches in the walls of Zion: The lofty and airy *Position* of Men's Hats; the *Ribbands*, *Knots*, and *Ruffles*, upon Women's Heads, *&c.*, the curious *Girdles*, and costly *diamond* Buckles we are upbraided with, with other pompous and expensive Array: As also the putting on of *mourning Apparel* for the Deceased, with some other customs at *Funerals* not approved of, but disliked and advised against by our faithful Friends, as not comporting with the Truth we profess. But of all the giddy Modes, antick and fantastick Inventions, that ever old Satan or his Agents, with respect to external Dress, have hitherto vampt up, since the Fall of *Adam*; was there ever any Thing contriv'd so much for the *Ruin* of *Female Modesty*, and the Incitement to *Sensuality* and *Corruption*, as these immodest, indecent, odious, *extravagant Hoops*, calculated not for the strait, but for the wide Gate and broad Way, leading to Destruction? Nay, some are ready to say, either contract these scandalous expanded Hoops, or else enlarge your Doors, Portals, Styles, Coaches, &c.[2]

The London Epistles contain recurrent passages urging faithfulness to the way of plainness, and these annual messages endeavoured, without complete success, to make the membership realize the great importance of holding fast to these distinguishing traits.

"As it is evident," says the Epistle of 1732, "that the simplicity and distinguishing plainness of our holy profession are

[1] *Rules of Discipline* (Philadelphia, 1825), pp. 73, 74.
[2] *Epistle of Love and Caution* (Dublin, 1749), pp. 27, 28. The italics are his.

too much lost amongst us, respecting language, apparel and behaviour; we therefore exhort all to keep under the power of the cross of Christ, which will crucify to the world and the vanities of it, and bring up in a true life of self-denial, agreeable to the gospel, and example of our Elders."[1]

In 1745 those who wrote the Epistle were conscious of failure and aware of declension in what seemed to them the marks of true Quakerism, and once more they sounded the note of warning as many before had done.

We find ourselves under a necessity to observe a great declension among too many of the professors of truth from that Christian plainness and humble deportment which our ancient Friends were exemplary in. This declension, we apprehend, is principally occasioned through a neglect of an inward and reverend waiting on God for the influence of his Holy Spirit to lead and guide us in the way of holiness and truth: this would instruct us to renounce the world and its vain and foolish habits and customs and to persevere in the good old way of simplicity and self-denial.[2]

The Epistle of 1753 contained a passage which was quoted and repeated until it must have been woven into the "memory-paths" of many Friends.

"It is a matter of exceeding grief," this message declares, "and concern to many of the faithful among us to observe how far that exemplary plainness of habit, speech and deportment, which distinguished our forefathers, and for which they patiently underwent the reproach and contradiction of sinners, are now departed from by too many under our name, and who frequent our religious assemblies. A declension from the simplicity of truth herein hath been, and we fear is, attended with pernicious consequences, in opening the way of some, the more easily and unobserved, to attend the places of public resort for the exercise of sports, plays and other hurtful and destructive diversions of the age, from which truth taught our faithful Elders, and still teaches us, to refrain."[3]

The strong emphasis which was laid by all the spiritual pillars of the Society upon the peculiar garb and speech and the "testimonies" of Friends added, more or less

[1] *Y.M. Epistles*, vol. i. p. 197. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 249.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 283.

unconsciously, to the quietistic temper and atmosphere and nurtured an ever-increasing fear of the world and its taint. In the earlier period the Quaker concern had been to avoid everything which loaded life with complexity or with the burdens of fashion. One form of garb at this early stage was no more "sacred" than another. The stress was laid on plainness and on simplicity, and the desire was paramount to liberate life. In this later period, the stress was laid on the definite garb that already marked the Quaker as peculiar. The speech, too, was a matter of great moment, not because "thou" and "thee" and "thy" were more simple or more democratic than their plural form, but because they were the badge of a type of spiritual life. These peculiar badges were now thought of as a *hedge* from the world, a cross by which the timorous and sensitive soul was crucified to the society around. Here was a way by which own-will and selfish desire for worldly pleasure could be killed out and the person set apart in a peculiar group that had by an act of renunciation withdrawn from this world and had chosen the kingdom of God for its portion. There were, no doubt, many other incentives operating to keep alive the habits of peculiarity, but it is unmistakable that the aspiration for self-annihilation and the yearning for the triumph of the *pure* spirit were underlying motives which raised dress and speech to an unwonted religious significance. The entire group, by its visible badges and by its marks of separation, proclaimed its distrust of the world and its fear of the world's way to peace and satisfaction.

The arguments that were used tended more and more, as time went on, to treat "plainness" as an end in itself, as a religious form possessing in itself some mysterious and ineffable efficacy. It was a test of the spiritual mettle of the young Friend. It revealed his willingness to "take up the cross." When the Quaker garb was assumed by one who had not been previously wearing it the step was felt to be momentous, both by the one taking it and by the members of the meeting to which he or she belonged. The step was not seldom attended by a

profound religious experience, like that which has often marked the entrance upon life in a monastery, or an instantaneous conversion. Like baptism, in the period of the primitive Church, which was an outward sign of a break with the world and a separation from it, the assumption of the "plain" garb of the Quakers also meant a separation and a dedication. It came, however, very easily to be a form, indeed a quite dead form. It did not always signify dedication; it was sometimes a mere show of a sanctity that did not in reality exist. Like all external symbols and forms, it fell easily into being a positive hindrance to genuine spiritual life. Too often it led to arrested development and allowed the wearer of the garb to stop with the sign of the attainment without pushing forward actually to attain. It was especially regrettable in the case of a Society which aimed to be a spiritual body, and which professed to have outgrown "forms" and ceremonies and symbols.

What it did accomplish, however, was the cultivation of group-loyalty and the intensification of corporate spirit, the unity of the Society. The garb became a sort of uniform and badge of the Fellowship. It worked, too, as the pious said it would, as a "hedge" from the world. Having on that distinguishing garb one hesitated to go to places that were considered morally dangerous. Many temptations of the world were forestalled by this expedient. But it is more than likely that other temptations and dangers in a subtler form beset the soul while it was evading these crass and obvious dangers. The only way of safety appears to be the creation of positive, absorbing interests which organize the instincts and emotions into higher systems so that they do not so easily carry one whither he would not.

The emphasis on garb was in any case excessive, and it tended almost certainly to frustrate real spirituality. It became a form, a yoke, a burden, a bondage. It occupied the foreground far too much. It got in the way of the freer interpretation of the aims and purposes of life. It kept the Friend not only from places of amuse-

ment, but it kept him as well from sharing in the tasks and problems of the social and political life where he was needed. He was hedged off from other people more than was good either for him or for them. It was often difficult for him to join in neighbourhood undertakings and in co-operative efforts for the improvement of society. It tended to produce a conservative and too nearly impervious body. Religion cannot be saved if it tries to save itself. It must fearlessly venture, go forth beyond its safe frontiers, and carry its spiritual insights, as a transforming energy, into the world, otherwise it will grow artificial itself and become a dry, dead thing,

Lost to her place and name.[1]

It is hardly possible to over-estimate the effect of the peculiar custom which Friends always maintained of holding a meeting for worship in the middle of the week. Like the customs already considered, this mid-week meeting custom was a good test of dedication. The meeting always came in the middle of the forenoon of a working day. The members usually lived widely scattered, many being distant a long way from the meeting-house. In the days of slow travel, by foot or horse, the entire forenoon would be consumed for many members by the requirements of the meeting. Usually, too, the entire family went, including the youngest children and the oldest patriarch of the group. All work, however important, had to be suspended. In the rural districts, which, in fact, furnished a large proportion of the membership, all farm operations would be laid aside, even in the busiest seasons, while the united family went to wait on God.

In many localities these meetings were frequently, if not generally, held in unbroken silence. No one went expecting to be entertained, or even to be edified with good preaching. If the silence were broken at all it would be by some plain, everyday member of the group,

[1] The subject of "Plainness" is well treated in Henry Tuke's *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 154-157; James Backhouse's *Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, Appendix B; J. S. Rowntree's *Quakerism Past and Present*, pp. 141-147; and in Amelia M. Gummere's *The Quaker: A Study in Costume* (Phila., 1901).

who would give a simple communication, expressing what had been "borne in on his mind" while sitting in the silence, or possibly some one would, reverently and with awe and deep emotion, address the Almighty, while all the others stood with heads uncovered.

The mid-week-meeting custom prevailed in all the educational institutions of Friends, so that children, whether at home or at school, grew up with the meeting-habit formed. The custom was a part of life, and probably for most a very formative part. It certainly added to the consciousness of being "peculiar." Quaker boys and girls left their playmates at meeting-time and went with their elders. Friends were naturally the only people in the community who thus broke in on the business of the day and interrupted it for purposes of worship. The young at least could hardly help thinking during the long stretches of silence what an unusual performance it was in which they were engaged. It either aroused a revolt in the young mind *or* it produced a deepened loyalty, and for the most part the effect was deepened loyalty. The sacrifice involved in the act cultivated an unconscious devotion.

A passage in the London *Epistle* for 1765 gives an excellent account of the way in which this custom affected the thoughts of the faithful. It says:

> It is not enough for us to meet, in order for public worship, when we find little or nothing else to do. The Lord Almighty requires the first fruits, the prime of our service, and will not accept the refuse, either of our time or talents. If we prefer worldly pursuits, or idle amusements, at such times when we ought to be solemnly engaged in this great duty, may it not be justly said, that we follow after lying vanities and forsake our own mercies?
>
> Shall the poor perishing gratifications of self-love, or any inconveniences of a trivial nature, be suffered to prevent our dutiful attendance upon Him, in whom alone stands our everlasting interest? Shall cloudy sky, a little wet, a little cold, a little ease to the flesh, a view to earthly gain, or any common incident, furnish an excuse for declining this duty?[1]

[1] *V.M. Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 337, 338. The last paragraph of the above is still preserved in the London *Discipline*.

Hardly less important were the recurrent meetings for business, the Monthly, the Quarterly and the Yearly Meetings, since they, more than any other gatherings, formed social ties and created group-interests. In the period covered by the hundred years from 1760 to 1860, these meetings came to be considered of most vital importance and were attended by all the concerned Friends and their families. Those who came from a distance to Monthly Meeting were invited to dinner in homes near the meeting-house. "We know we are few," a country Friend said at Monthly Meeting, "and we own that we are weak, but we love one another." The love and hospitality were strongly in evidence on these meeting occasions. As the Quarterly Meetings covered a much wider area, often an entire county, there was a large extension of the generous capacity of Quaker hospitality. Yearly Meeting brought a multitude together. Friends travelled to it in groups and lived together in large numbers either in capacious Quaker homes or in boarding-houses of the approved type, of which there would be a "white list."

These successive meetings did two important things: they brought the whole membership vitally into all the problems and concerns of the Society, and they furnished excellent opportunities for forming the group-life, which was an essential feature of the Quakerism during that particular hundred years. With frequent iteration in these meetings the young Friends heard the call to individual faithfulness. They were urged to attend mid-week meetings. They were told how their forerunners and ancestors had suffered for the "Truth." They were reminded of the ideals and testimonies of the Society to which they belonged. They were appealed to with fervour and unction to take up the cross and share the mission of the "peculiar people" to which they belonged.

The dinners together were rich with reminiscences and full of good fellowship. They were occasions which drew the young unconsciously into the spirit of the group. They accomplished in some slight measure what "the

breaking of bread" together accomplished in the early Church toward the formation of the "Koinonia," *i.e.* the Communion or the Fellowship, or the Unity.[1] It would have been impossible to have maintained the Society of Friends, during the "peculiar people" period, without these group meetings, with their special atmosphere and social setting. They produced a coherence, insight and loyalty for which in the life of a religious movement there are no substitutes.

A good account of the interesting journey to Yearly Meeting in the days of slow travel is given in Anne Ogden Boyce's *Records of a Quaker Family*:

These journeys to the Yearly Meeting were very important events. The few Friends who had carriages of their own sometimes travelled in them to London, and horses were engaged at the different posting-houses on the road. The travellers slept at inns, but more often at private houses. Great hospitality was extended by Friends to each other, especially when there was any tie of kinship. Friends who were dwellers near the sea-coast occasionally braved the discomforts and perils of the sea-voyage for the sake of attending the meeting. A group of Lincolnshire farmers used to ride their strong horses as far as Tottenham, where a Friend who had fields and stabling took charge of the animals until they were again required for the return journey.

Few persons had the leisure to convert the journeys to London into such pleasant tours throughout England as did our former acquaintance, Thomas Wilkinson, who, in 1791, performed the whole journey on foot, walking the distance of three hundred miles in eight days. He passed from his beautiful Westmorland home across the wilds of Stanmore, and the varied scenes of the Yorkshire dales, to the rich historical interests and the cultured hospitalities of York; then visited the gardens of John Scott, of Amwell; and, in London, breakfasted with his friends, of whom he speaks as "Edmund and Jane Burke," and was taken by the great orator to see the trial of Warren Hastings. On Wilkinson's first journey to London, in 1785, he chronicles that as he rode from the door of his home, "my mother shed tears, and my sisters looked as long as I was in sight." This

[1] See the excellent chapter on the "Koinonia," "What happened at Pentecost," by C. A. Anderson Scott in the volume *The Spirit*, edited by Canon Streeter (London and New York, 1919).

was the usual feeling of country people at that time, when their friends were setting out upon so long and perilous a journey.[1]

No account of peculiar Quaker customs would be complete which should omit a consideration of the method of conducting business meetings, since this method revealed a real touch of genius. The meeting for business—Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly, with many other supplementary varieties—always opened with silence and closed in silence. It was a deeply religious occasion, impressive in its solemnity. It was marked by similar characteristics to those which prevailed in the meetings for worship. There was the same expectation of guidance, long pauses of hush and a sense of awe at the thought of breaking the silence, though Friends "speaking to business" were not usually as much given to cadenced, rhythmical tone as was the case in preaching.

No vote was ever taken, hands were not raised to be counted. No parliamentary forms were pursued. The Clerk's function was not that of a presiding officer. The meeting was utterly democratic, with no president or chairman. The Clerk was there to introduce business according to good order and to gather up and report "the sense of the meeting." In doing this he was not expected to let his preference swerve him; he was not to allow his hand to tilt the scale. He was solely to sum up and announce the course which the corporate group there present wished taken. There would often be many views expressed, perhaps divergent and conflicting. He had to weigh them and to judge what was trivial and what was solid and significant. Generally as the discussion proceeded the trivial suggestions dropped out of focus and the weighty proposals accumulated momentum and volume, so that the Clerk could see clearly enough the positive, prevailing "sense of the meeting" If, however, there were a persistently marked divergence of judgment, if there were two or more positions which held their ground and won the support of seasoned Friends, then the Clerk would quietly say that "way did not appear to

[1] *Records of a Quaker Family* (London, 1889), p. 55.

open" for any definite action, and that perhaps Friends would approve of postponing the matter to the next meeting.

It was a settled custom that nothing should be done which could not be done in unity, *i.e.* with the solid body of the meeting in favour of it. In most cases, as the consideration of the problem proceeded, there would be developed a spirit of submission, conciliation and mutual understanding. Some Friend, with a reconciling mind, would hit upon an inclusive proposal which would bind together the good features of both divergent propositions and draw all present into harmony with his larger plan. Then would follow a chorus of responses: "I approve," "I unite," "I like that," etc. The very fact that no action would be taken until unity was reached necessitated the cultivation of the habit of enlargement of outlook. Instead of blocking action it encouraged the widening of the scope of action. It trained Friends to seize upon a higher unifying principle that would meet and satisfy the various partial and one-sided attitudes.[1]

The method of taking "the sense of the meeting" did not always work. There were two conditions which might defeat it. No Clerk could take "the sense of the meeting" when the speaking was vague and aimless, as was sometimes the case, or as one Friend wittily put it, when "there was no sense in what was being said." And there was no miracle attached to the system by which peace and unity could be created where stubborn, selfish, hostile "parties" were determined at all cost to get their ends. In times of schism and separation, as we shall see, no Clerk could get the "sense of a meeting" where both parties were bent either on having their way or wrecking the existing meeting. The Quaker custom of gathering "the sense" was grounded in the religious life. If the religious life ran dry the method became as weak as was shorn Samson. It was a delicate and

[1] Not infrequently, when the matters proved too complicated for immediate solution, they would be referred to a committee, which in the interim between the sessions would formulate a plan in the hope of unifying the meeting.

sensitive affair, and it could work only when the conditions were favourable for it. It presupposed the presence and fellowship of the Spirit, and it counted upon a deeper unity of love underlying all diversity and difference of idea.

There are allusions and brief references to this custom in the Journals of eighteenth-century Friends, but there is no extensive treatment of it anywhere. It was so much a part of their life and habit that it did not occur to them to reflect upon it or to write about it. There is an interesting passage in *Quaker Campaigns*, by William Jones of Sunderland, which is worthy of note, though it comes out of a later time than that now under review. William Jones visited the Vatican in 1871 and had an interview with the famous Cardinal Antonelli, who had heard of the custom of taking the "sense of the meeting" and wanted to learn how it was done. He said:

"I understand that in your meetings for Church affairs you have no President, and that you never decide any questions by vote. Is that so?"

W. J.: "Practically that is so. One of our number is appointed as 'Clerk' of the meeting. His principal functions are to ascertain the 'evident sense' of the meeting, or the general consensus of opinion upon the various matters under consideration, and to register its decisions in suitable minutes."

Cardinal Antonelli: "I am deeply interested in knowing how this can be done without a vote; for so far as I know, your practice is quite unique in the Christian world, or in the annals of Church history. . . . But suppose questions of great importance were to arise; questions which might even be *vital* to your existence as a Church. How could the opinion of the meeting be correctly ascertained, and a satisfactory decision be arrived at, in cases like these, unless the sentiments of each individual Church member were plainly manifested by a vote, or its equivalent?" Then, after a pause, turning to me, "Have *you* ever done this?"

W. J.: "Yes, whilst acting as 'Clerk' to what we term a Quarterly Meeting, which is composed of several smaller sectional or Monthly Meetings, questions came up for decision which were of grave importance, though none, within my remembrance, that could be described as *vital* to our existence."

Cardinal Antonelli: "Ah! Now we have got down to a man

that has done it! I am all attention. Pray, my friend, tell me how *you* did it."

The question for a moment puzzled me, as I mentally asked myself, "How *did* I do it?" Never before had the difficulty been thus pointedly presented to my mind. Custom and habit, from youth up, in the Society of Friends, has enabled us, I suppose almost intuitively, to arrive at the result, without so much as a thought of the difficulties which our method of procedure presents to outsiders. To those who have never witnessed, in our meetings for Church affairs, the mutual concessions, the bearing and forbearing, in the spirit of that charity which thinketh no evil, it may doubtless appear strange that, on questions which cause a wide divergence of opinion, a sufficient degree of unanimity is ever obtained to be accepted as the deliberate judgment of the meeting; at the right moment, however, the "Clerk" generally sees his way to record the decision, as the "evident sense of the meeting."

Cardinal Antonelli is by no means the only person I have met with who has confessed his difficulty in understanding the Quaker method of deciding questions, not by majorities, but by that which in the view of "Friends" constitutes the "weight of the meeting."

The explanation given in answer to the Cardinal was to the effect, that it was not always the length of speeches, or their number, that influenced the decision of the "Clerk" in discussions of importance, but that due regard was paid to the sentiments of a minority, if such minority were constituted, as is sometimes the case, of the more experienced, and the more spiritually minded among the members present. In a tone of surprise he exclaimed, "What! have *you* done that?"[1]

Until recent times the men and women usually met in separate rooms for their business meetings, but as there were many points of contact in the business which they were transacting, it was often necessary for the meeting of one sex to communicate with that of the other. This was done through messengers. The mission of the messenger was an ordeal for a timid person. If it were a messenger from the women's meeting she would open the door of the men's meeting and enter. Instantly there would be a hush. If any one were speaking he stopped. The messenger then proceeded up the aisle to the Clerk's desk, communicated her message to the Clerk, and either with-

[1] William Jones, *Quaker Campaigns* (London, 1899), pp. 196-198.

drew at once or sat while waiting for an answer if one was to be given. The messenger from the men's meeting went through a similar course of procedure.

Not infrequently some man or woman Friend would feel moved to communicate a spiritual message to the meeting of the other sex. This could take place only after both meetings had been consulted and had united with the Friend's "concern." When liberated to go, a companion was appointed, and the two made the visit to the other meeting, solemnly going forward to the Minister's gallery, sitting for a time in silence, delivering the message, and then, after another silence, withdrawing. It was a stately and impressive scene, and hard to match for weight and dignity.

Even more unique was the marriage ceremony which was another peculiar Quaker custom. In the eighteenth century "the parties intending to join in marriage" were expected to inform the Preparative Meeting in writing, and this meeting in the order of business notified the next succeeding Monthly Meeting. At the proper time in the course of business the two persons, usually accompanied by their respective parents, and in many sections accompanied also by two men and two women Friends appointed for this purpose, entered the women's meeting and there "declared their intentions"; the man saying, "I intend to take A. B. to be my wife, if the Lord permit"; the woman following with a like expression of intention. The parents, if present, publicly expressed their consent to the proposed union. Thereupon the two Friends and their attendants proceeded to the men's meeting and repeated their declarations as indicated above. If parents were not present in person their consent was read. Then a committee of men and women was appointed to consider the proposal. At the next Monthly Meeting the committee made its report, the men reporting to their meeting and the women to theirs. The report usually stated that the committee had investigated the life and conversation of the two Friends and believed them "clear to proceed" with their intention. This always meant

that the committee had endeavoured to find out whether the two Friends were free from all promises or obligations to marry any one else and free of implication in any unsuitable relation. At a later period it became the custom in many meetings for the prospective bride and groom to appear at a joint Monthly Meeting, the shutters which usually separated the men's and women's meetings being raised for the occasion, and there to declare that "with divine permission and Friends' approbation we intend marriage with one another."[1] Whereupon a committee of men and women was appointed to see if the two Friends were "clear," and provided with permission from parents or guardians to take the step. This committee reported its findings to the next Monthly Meeting, and then if "way was clear" for proceeding a special Meeting might be appointed for the solemnization of the marriage. It was, however, a more usual custom to have the marriage solemnized at the regular mid-week meeting to which the bride belonged. A committee of men and women who were "judicious, grave and weighty" were appointed to have oversight of the marriage and to see that it was performed "decently, gravely and weightily." Friends were frequently cautioned to observe "moderation at wedding feasts," and the grave and judicious committee was expected to have some care over the festal occasion which followed the meeting. At the meeting at which the marriage took place the two Friends rose in the silence, took each other by the hand, and said the following, or similar, words, the bridegroom beginning: "In the presence of the Lord and this assembly, I take thee [naming the bride's name] to be my wife, promising through divine assistance to be unto thee a faithful and affectionate husband until death shall separate us."[2] The bride spoke on her part words of like import. Then they signed a certificate which was read by an elderly Friend; after which the meeting continued until closed in the usual

[1] At a still later period this declaration was sent in writing together with the consent of parents.

[2] The words varied slightly in different Disciplines. I have followed the text of the New England Discipline of 1809.

way by the shaking of hands, started by the Minister or Elder sitting at the head or top of the meeting.

A very important effect of all this careful and solemn procedure was the elimination of hasty and ill-considered marriages. Everything was done which could be done to make the step seem a very serious and weighty one. It was raised to a high spiritual level and surrounded with awe and reverence. The permission of the meeting to proceed was given only after a searching examination of "the walk and conversation" of the prospective husband and wife, and the entire affair involved the action of four successive meetings. No provision was made for divorce, and in the period during which this form of marriage prevailed, divorce among Friends was practically unknown. It was a basic idea in the minds of Friends that the divine Head of the Church united husband and wife in a spiritual union.

So important did this form and method of marriage come to be to the minds of Friends, that no one was allowed to remain in membership if he or she entered into the marriage relation in a manner unapproved by the Society. The Quaker procedure in marriage could be used only in cases where both bride and groom were Friends. To marry a non-Friend in the early period involved the necessity of marrying "after the world's way," and *that* always meant the stern application of the Discipline.

"It is the sense and judgment of this meeting," runs the clause in the London *Discipline* of 1802, "that where any marry by a priest, or in any other manner contrary to the established rules of the Society, they shall be dealt with in a spirit of Christian love and tenderness, agreeably to our known Discipline; and that after the commission of such offence, their collection shall not be received, nor shall they be relieved in the manner of poor Friends,[1] nor be admitted to sit in Meetings of discipline [*i.e.* business] until they be restored into unity with the Monthly Meeting to which they belong."[2]

This course of disciplinary action was also extended

[1] This means that in case they fall into poverty and want, they will not receive assistance from the meeting. Friends take care of their poor members.

[2] London *Discipline* (ed. 1802), p. 71.

to parents or guardians who "consented to or encouraged such marriage."

The only way to secure reinstatement was to make an "acknowledgment," giving evidence of "sincere repentance for the transgression" and good signs of "conduct circumspect and consistent with our religious profession." This strictness of Discipline in the manner of marriage became the greatest cause for the decrease of the membership in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Violations of the marriage rules were the usual causes of disownment, and the number of Friends uncompromisingly cut off on this ground was very large. In Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting one hundred and fifty-one were disowned for violation of the marriage rules between the years 1837 and 1854, which is only a sample of what was happening in all communities of Friends.[1] It was the disclosure of facts like that which led John Bright to say: "This is a wonderful picture of what good men may do acting on mistaken notions of duty to destroy the very structure they are most anxious to uphold." The Quaker marriage service was of course an unusual variation from the prescribed and legal manner in the countries where Friends lived, and it was in the early days a procedure that involved serious risk of legal difficulty. Before the opening of the period covered in this volume Quaker marriages had won a pretty secure place, though they still lacked the solid basis of a direct Parliamentary Act. By an Act in the 26th year of George II., 1753, the Quaker method of marriage was distinctly recognized, where both parties were Friends. By Act of 6 and 7 William IV., 1837, Quaker marriages were confirmed as good in law, and finally, by an important Act in the 10th and 11th years of Queen Victoria, 1847 and 1848, it was declared and enacted that all marriages solemnized according to the usages of the Quakers "were and are good in law to all intents and purposes whatsoever provided that the parties to such marriages were both Quakers."[2]

[1] Rowntree's *Yorkshire Q.M.* p. 29.

[2] Davis, *A Digest of Legislative Enactments relating to the Society of Friends*

Another custom, not confined to Friends but observed by them in a peculiar way, deserves mention here. This was the custom of family worship. Each morning, at the close of breakfast, the father of the family, or some other member of it, took the Bible reverently, opened it more or less at random, and read with deep feeling the passage of his choice. The Bible was laid down, the spectacles removed, and then a very solemn silence covered the family for some time, occasionally broken by prayer or testimony, but usually without spoken words. In families that were seasoned and concerned this custom was well-nigh absolute. Only the most urgent requirements ever interrupted it. If it were for some insuperable circumstance postponed in the morning, it had its place at the evening meal, but that was extremely rare. Breakfast was arranged to give time for morning worship before the children started for school and before the work of the day scattered the family. It was not a mere form, an unmeaning custom. It went deep into the spiritual life of the home, and did much to form the religious culture of the youth. They felt here, even more than in the larger gatherings, the reality of God and the meaning of worship. William Dewsbury had counselled Friends in the primitive days of Quakerism, saying:

> Call your families together to wait upon the Lord, in the fear of His name. Certainly the Lord will answer the end of your endeavours, by causing the savoury life to stream through you, to season your servants and children, that the Church of God may be in every particular family and habitation of His people.[1]

Messages expressed in a similar spirit to that were very common in the days of itinerant ministry, and they frequently appear in Epistles and Journals. The custom rested on a genuine spiritual insight, and it had a deep and effective influence upon the inner life of many Friends.

Not so intelligent nor so spiritually based was the

(2nd ed. 1849), pp. 127-136. The Act of 1837 did not apply to Ireland, though the later Act in the reign of Victoria did. This matter is carefully treated in *Beginnings of Quakerism*, pp. 145, 146.

[1] *The Life of Wm. Dewsbury* (in the Barclay Series, London, 1836), p. 252.

Quaker custom of excluding music and other sources of aesthetic enjoyment. The opposition to music in meetings for worship had a solid ground. The whole method of worship maintained by Friends called for hush and silence and other similar ways of unifying the group. They felt music and singing to be an interruption. They wanted the soul to be utterly free to come in its own undisturbed way directly into relation and contact with the living Spirit, and they had a natural fear that any form of music would quickly become artificial, external, and so be a hindrance rather than a help to vital worship. That may of course be a debatable question, but Friends held it to be settled. In any case they preferred the quiet, and were convinced that God and man found each other best in silence.

Their exclusion of music and singing from the home and from their educational system is not so easily defended. The reasons which they gave for the exclusion are not convincing. It is true that music has a sensuous basis, but so, too, has almost everything else in a normal person's life. Senses and emotions are not to be despised. It is a fact, as was insisted, that music is often put to low uses, but so, too, is money often put to low uses, and many other things which the Quaker prized. It would have been more fitting to have discriminated between the high and low uses, and to have trained the character to balance and restraint. It was often said, no doubt truly, that perfection in music involved a very great outlay of time (the Quaker usually said waste of time), but so does perfection in any field that trains and disciplines the mind and muscles involve much time and devotion. It becomes a serious question which forms of training and discipline are most worth while in their permanent effect. Without adequate knowledge the Quaker settled the question once for all against music, and decided both that it had no proper place in education and that it was an unsuitable form of indulgence.

The traditional Quaker attitude toward music, art, the drama (especially toward Shakespearian drama, which was

strictly excluded from Friends' Schools) and other forms of culture and refinement, as it hardened and crystallized, was a real misfortune. It deprived the Friend of a very important side of life. The native tendency to play, to enjoy, to use and liberate surplus energy is one of the most important tendencies of life, and the aesthetic forms of it are the highest and best forms. To stifle or to kill out these great elemental forces and values is to suffer shrinkage and to alter profoundly the personal nature. The exclusion and limitation no doubt drove some Friends more earnestly toward their one goal of aspiration, which was to be a sensitive organ of the will of God, but it made the Society more puritanic than it should have been, and it deprived many individual Friends of that touch of sweetness and light which was needed to complete their characters.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PROPAGATION OF QUAKERISM BY ITINERANT MINISTRY

ONE of the most unique features of Quakerism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was its spontaneous and unorganized itinerant ministry. During the lifetime of George Fox and the other founders of the Society a certain central and organizing direction, never perhaps quite consciously recognized or rendered articulate, was always given to the movement by the original leaders. George Fox usurped no official leadership, and he was thoroughly loyal to his ideal of a religious Society existing without any visible head, but his extraordinary personality, his inherent gifts of leadership, his organizing capacity and his constant intercourse by extensive travel, and by epistolary correspondence with the groups of Friends in Europe and America, gave him a natural and unescapable guiding and shaping influence which, though in a far lesser measure, was shared by the other "first publishers of Truth," as the primitive apostles of Quakerism were called.

But with the death of Fox and all the other "first publishers" there was no succession of central leadership. There was now neither official head nor any conspicuously predominant directing personality. It was a problem of capital importance whether this Society, launched in the high faith that it was to be now at length the true Church of Christ, and the living body of the Holy Spirit, would crystallize into a dull and static sect, monotonously repeating the refrain learned from the "fathers," or whether it

would disintegrate and fall to pieces, as is the usual fate of fluid and unorganized movements. A third course was found, though without definite human planning, which in some measure avoided both horns of the apparent dilemma. For more than a hundred years a continuous stream of travelling Ministers went forth from one end of the Society to the other, formulating the message of the Society, shaping its ideals, propagating its spirit, awakening the youth, maintaining the unity of the loosely formed body, perfecting the organization, establishing a well-defined order and body of customs, convincing new persons to join in membership, and convicting existing members here and there that they were recipients of a call and a gift to become Ministers, to take up the mantles of those who were falling by reason of age or death.

These itinerant Ministers were without question the makers and builders of the Society of Friends of the period now under review. They formed a kind of "inner church" within the Church. What they called "the Truth," which was their lofty phrase for Quakerism and its spiritual ideals, absorbed them body and soul as a patriot in the stress of his country's need is absorbed in preserving and promoting the national life. They were uniformly of the "prophetic" type. They were not prepared, by training or education, for the ministry. They felt themselves rather divinely called out and chosen to be mouthpieces for the Spirit, and they endeavoured, often with agonizing struggles that nearly cost life itself, to speak only what was given from above. They were not sorted out and selected for their itinerant missions by meetings, or boards or officials. Their "concern," as they called it, that is their marching orders and plan of campaign, was always inwardly initiated and developed. They believed with implicit faith that the God of all the universe, whose command, "Let there be," had made the world, was whispering His majestic will in their inner ear, and was making them His royal messengers for the announcement of His purposes. This lofty conception of

their call and anointing was held by the membership at large as well as by the Ministers themselves, and this prevailing "idea," this "group-climate," gave the visiting Ministers, wherever they came, an extraordinary spiritual authority, as we shall see.

It became a well-settled custom, already initiated and rendered almost sacred by "the first publishers," for the Quaker message-bearers to record their experiences in autobiographical narratives, which they called Journals. These Journals form the main literary contribution which Friends made in the eighteenth century, and they furnish the best material in existence for a study of the mental outlook of the Quaker leaders of the times, their religious ideals and aspirations, the type of message delivered, the steps of preparation through which the message-bearers passed, and the general condition of the Quaker meetings in the various sections of the world. Few of these Journals are marked by any touch of literary quality—Woolman's, as I have said, is a striking exception—and none of them exhibit in high degree powers of introspection and psychological analysis that make them documents of universal human interest. Their scope is narrow and their range limited. They all record certain characteristic and typical experiences, they are all formed on a common model, and they all reveal persons who are well-nigh oblivious to the appeal of nature or literature, or the press of world-problems, and whose supreme business is to get into parallelism with the currents of the Spirit felt within them. The number of these Journals and personal Memoirs which exist in published form, covering the period from 1725 to 1850, is very large, and they have well-nigh all been read as data and material for this and other chapters.

Great as was the influence of the living voice and the warm and vital presence of these itinerant Ministers, as they came in continuous succession, the influence of the printed Journals was perhaps even greater. They formed in multitudes of Quaker homes the main body of reading matter, and they gave the susceptible Quaker youth the

formative ideas and ideals of his faith. If he learned to *read,* as he often did, from the Bible, he learned to *think* in terms of these spiritual leaders of his own people, and he early came to expect in his own life the sort of experiences that had prepared them for their mission. There were no doubt Quaker boys and girls who had a surfeit of this type of literary pabulum and who revolted from it, at least during the years of robust originality, but there was a group-faith in the true Quaker family, a prevailing sense of the divine commission of these message-bearers and a feeling of wonder over their extraordinary "leadings," which gave their Journals a commanding place with the serious-minded, both old and young.

I shall now endeavour to show from the Journals, in some detail, the work and function of these itinerant Ministers, their steps of preparation for service, their type of ministry, their methods of travel, their constructive influence, their spiritual ideals, and I have dealt in a preceding chapter with the important influence which they had in the unconscious process of making eighteenth century Quakerism a "quietistic" movement.

The word "preparation," to these Quaker journalists, always refers to a divine work of grace upon their souls and to what they believed to be a heavenly "girding." The autobiographical narratives open with a dearth of material for discovering the earthly lineage of the writer and his opportunities for mental development. The formative influence of physical environment and the shaping forces of home and community and school are for the most part passed over in silence as though calling for no observation. But that mysterious touch of God upon the soul, that silent but majestic invasion of the inner citadel, that unescapable beckoning of the Highest, that gentle drawing, moulding, recreating force of life within—of that "preparing" they all have much to say.

Catharine Phillips (born Payton, in Worcestershire, England, 1726, and died 1794), whose Journal is of more than ordinary interest, informs the reader that from the

very beginning of her conscious life she was aware of an interior work of God upon her—"I cannot date," she says, "the first dawn of divine light upon my soul."[1] Opportunities were presented to her for developing her mind, which was evidently highly gifted by nature, but she felt herself mercifully preserved from having gone far on this "false trail." Here is her own account, and it can be taken as a sample of how the "higher" training drew away from the "lower":

> I was in the way to embellish my understanding, as is the common phrase, and become accomplished to shine in conversation; which might have tended to feed the vain proud nature, render me pleasing to those who were in it, and make me conspicuous in the world. But the Lord, in his wisdom, designed to bring me to public view in a line directly opposite to worldly wisdom, pleasure, or honour; and when *he was pleased more fully to open to my understanding his great and glorious work of renovation of spirit*, I saw that I must desist from these publications and studies, and pursue the one necessary business, viz., working out the salvation of my immortal soul: and I esteem it a great mercy that I readily attended to this intimation. However lawful it may be, in proper seasons, to look into the works of nature, and become acquainted with the history of former or present times, my attention was now powerfully attracted to higher subjects; and had I pursued those lower things, I might have become as a vessel marred upon the wheel.[2]

Mary Dudley (born Stokes, in Bristol, England, 1750, died 1823), one of the greatest and most influential of the women preachers of the eighteenth century, went through a similar experience. She was of "quick parts," "facile at acquiring knowledge," and made "rapid progress in learning." All of which only fed "the vanity that is inherent in the human mind." Even at this early period she was "at times sensible of the visitation of divine Love," and finally in her twentieth year, "after a disappointment in an affectionate attachment terminated the attraction to visible objects," a still more powerful "visitation" came

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of Catharine Phillips*, printed in "Friends' Library" (Phila., 1847), vol. xi. p. 189. Her *Memoirs* were published in London in 1797 with some of her Epistles.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 190.

to her, to which, she says, "all that was within me bowed in deep prostration and yielded to the superior power of heavenly love," and "a still small voice whispered unutterable things" in her soul; and step by step she was "prepared" for the work of her life.[1]

John Churchman (born in Nottingham, Pennsylvania, 1705, died 1775), a man as tender in spirit as John Woolman, and who undoubtedly in a profound degree influenced the latter, tells us how his simple childish soul was visited, and how he was brought from outer to inner happenings.

"About the age of eight years," he says, "as I sat in a small meeting, the Lord by *the reachings of His heavenly love and goodness* overcame and tendered my heart and by His glorious Light discovered to me the knowledge of Himself, and I also saw myself. . . . In His infinite mercy and goodness, He clearly informed me that if I would mind *the discoveries of His Truth and pure Light*, He would forgive what I had done in the time of my ignorance. Oh, the stream of love that filled my heart with solid joy." [2]

Instances of early "visitation" are given in nearly every Journal—Martha Routh in her seventh year experienced "the work of Truth operating on her soul"; Job Scott could remember, as early as he could remember anything, "the secret workings of the Lord in his heart"; John Woolman testifies that he "became acquainted with the operations of divine love" before he was seven years old; William Savery had his boyish wandering mind "broken in upon," was "disturbed in his false rest," was seized with "horror and great inward trouble," and then, "through adorable mercy," was brought into such inexpressible joy that tears ran down his face; William Hunt was "visited with tendering impressions" when he was eight years old; James Gough often had "fresh desires in his heart after redemption," and so the accounts run, through the long list of autobiographies.[3]

[1] *The Life of Mary Dudley* (London, 1825), pp. 1-17.

[2] *Gospel Labours and Christian Experiences of John Churchman* (Phila., 1779), pp. 1, 2.

[3] *Memoirs of Martha Routh* (York, 1822); *Journal of Job Scott* (Phila., 1831); *Journal of John Woolman* (Whittier's Ed., Boston); *William Savery's*

Samuel Neale, an Irish Friend born in 1729, an extensive traveller and devoted labourer, has given a vivid account of his crisis. He was a gay youth, absorbed in frivolities and under the influence of lively, pleasure-loving companions. He went to meeting one First Day morning which proved to be memorable for the rest of his life.

"In this meeting," he says, "my state was so opened to Catharine Payton (who with my beloved friend Mary Peisley were visiting the churches[1]) that all I had done seemed to have been unfolded to her in a wonderful manner. I was as one smitten to the ground dissolved in tears and without spirit. This was a visitation from the Most High."[2]

There came always at a later age a momentous crisis in the lives of these Ministers when their "call" was inwardly discovered, was tested out, and was finally "recognized" by the group to which the spiritual venturer belonged. The work of ministry was invariably thought of among Friends of this period as "awful business," "awful" being used here in its original meaning, and the "call" marked for them a mighty event.[3] All life was profoundly altered henceforth. They were to be voices and mouthpieces for the infinite God. They were to speak for Him. They were to "stand," to use the common phrase of the day, "as trumpets through which the Lord's voice would sound to the people." "I trembled at the awful responsibility," writes Sarah Elgar in 1775,[4] and all Quaker Ministers who have recorded their emotions have spoken in a similar strain. When the great summons began to break in on the consciousness of the recipient, he generally held it off for a season, sometimes by turning to the attractions of the "world" and "gay companions," sometimes entering upon a period of inner questionings,

*Journal* (Ed. by Jonathan Evans, Phila., 1863); *Memoirs of William Hunt* (London, 1858); *Memoirs of James Gough* (Dublin, 1782).

[1] Samuel Neale afterwards married Mary Peisley.

[2] *Life of Samuel Neale* (London, 1845), p. 7.

[3] The annual Epistle of London Y.M. for 1759 says: "It is an awful thing to approach the presence of the Infinite Majesty of heaven and earth."

[4] "A Ministering Friend of a Bygone Time," *Friends' Quarterly Examiner* (1914), p. 351.

resurgent doubts and morbid introspection. Then followed a "novitiate" period, hard and thorny, full of baptisms and deep trials, often marked by illness and terrible tension, before the full "surrender" came and the lips were unsealed. Almost without exception the person thus struggling with a dawning consciousness of a "call" was confirmed in it by the prophetic words of some visiting Minister, and was helped by this Minister or by other chance visitors to find himself and to move out on his venture. A few concrete cases of these tempestuous voyages of discovery will make the matter clearer.

Martha Routh (born Winter, in Worcestershire, England, in 1743) was "awfully impressed" *in her fourteenth year*, "with a sense of duty under divine requirings to appear as a Minister." She passed through many months of "deep exercise" and then "gave way to fear," "lost ground through disobedience," got into company with "light" young people and drifted until she was seventeen. Between this period and her twenty-sixth year, one spiritual guide after another reached her and reminded her that "the divine Hand" was "preparing" her and "the heavenly Director" was leading her forward for His work. The spirit of prophecy was given both to servants and handmaids. "Those who came from far, as well as those who were near, clearly pointed out my state in public ministry, and some of them told me afterwards, they could have laid their hands on my head, but I kept as close as possible from any discovery." Under the strain which seemed "like the weight of mountains," her health broke down, and her friends despaired of her recovery, but she herself knew why she was "brought low," and when she surrendered her will and made "a fresh covenant with God to do what He required," her recovery was "speedy beyond all expectation." In this time of crisis, William Hunt of North Carolina, "that worthy seer in Israel," as she calls him, came to their meeting, and both in public and private he "searched her as with candles" and made her see the line of her life. She still, however, fought for release from the call until

another itinerant messenger, Mary Ridgway, in a public sermon, so "opened her state and administered to it" that Martha was afraid everybody in the meeting would know who was meant. Hereupon in her twenty-ninth year, after fifteen years of wilderness wandering, she yielded in complete resignation and opened her mouth in meeting as a herald.[1]

Patience Brayton, who was born at North-Kingston, State of Rhode Island, in 1733, "of parents professing Truth," early found in herself "a propensity to folly, dissipation, and vanity." She witnessed the Reprover following her by powerful convictions, though for a time she withstood them, and was reluctant in yielding to the divine Monitor, which exposed her to many deep conflicts and temptations:

> . . . yet frequent and powerful were the operations of the Holy Spirit on her mind; whereby a willingness was wrought in her to break off from her beloved companions in vanity and mirth, by yielding obedience to the Divine will, although she became a byword and derision of those her unprofitable companions.[2]

Job Scott of Providence, Rhode Island (born 1751), whose name has already appeared and will appear very often in these pages, had a long preparatory period of "exercises" and "tendering impressions" before he got his mouth opened.

> "I often believed," he writes, "as the *openings* of divine light came to me, that if I stood faithful, it would be required of me to declare what the Lord had done for me and given me an understanding of. This concern began now to grow upon me considerably, even to that degree that I felt at times in meetings a living engagement to communicate somewhat to the people. But, fearing I should begin *that great work* before the right time, I kept back; and even divers times, when I was almost ready to stand up, I concluded I would keep silence this once more."

At length, after haltings and balancings between condemnations and "increasing incomes of love," he received an inward pressure "so clear and confirming"

[1] *Memoirs of Martha Routh*, pp. 1-31.
[2] *Life and Labours of Patience Brayton* (New York, 1801), p. iii.

that it "erased all doubt and hesitation," and "in the fresh authority" of this motion he broke the silence and began his career of ministry. "I felt," he adds, "the returns of peace in my own bosom, as a river of life." "I sat down and was swallowed up in the luminous presence of Him who inhabits eternity and dwells in the light."[1]

The call of Nicholas Waln of Philadelphia was quite unlike that of most Friends. Instead of coming by slow stages, it seems to have burst suddenly upon him. The following account of the striking experience is given by Nathan Kite:

On Third day, the 4th of the Second month, 1772, Friends of Philadelphia were gathered to a youths' meeting, held in their Market Street house. The meeting had sat some time in silence, when a young man, not dressed in plain attire, of a remarkably good form, of middle height, well proportioned, and with a fine shaped head well set on his shoulders—of features regular and manly, but not beautiful, and at that time agitated with powerful emotions, left his seat in the middle of the house and advanced to the preachers' gallery. Surprise, no doubt, was awakened in many minds to see a youth, in the dress of a worldling, stepping to that place; and the astonishment was not removed when they beheld him kneel down in the attitude of prayer. The congregation arose, but for some minutes the internal agitation of the young man seemed to preclude utterance. At last his lips opened, and with a tremulous but powerfully melodious voice, these aspirations burst forth:

"O Lord God! arise, and let thine enemies be scattered! Baptize me—dip me—yet deeper in Jordan. Wash me in the laver of regeneration.

"Thou hast done much for me, and hast a right to expect much;—therefore, in the presence of this congregation, I resign myself and all that I have to Thee, O Lord!—it is thine! And I pray Thee, O Lord! to give me grace to enable me to continue firm in this resolution!

"Wherever Thou leadest me, O Lord! I will follow Thee; if through persecution, or even to martyrdom. If my life is required, I will freely sacrifice it.—Now I know that my Redeemer liveth, and the mountains of difficulty are removed. Hallelujah!

"Teach me to despise the shame, and the opinions of the

[1] *Journal of Job Scott*, Works, vol. i. pp. 53, 54.

people of the world. Thou knowest, O Lord! my deep baptisms. I acknowledge my manifold sins and transgressions. I know my unworthiness of the many favours I have received; and I thank Thee, O Father! that Thou hast hid Thy mysteries from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes and sucklings. Amen."

Slowly, sentence by sentence came forth, and whilst breathing the spirit of humble supplication, or bursting forth in a hallelujah of praise, they baptized the hearers into tears.

This young suppliant was Nicholas Waln, at that time one of the shrewdest, most promising, and most popular lawyers at the Philadelphia bar. For some months he had been passing through deep religious exercises, during which "judgment day," as he was wont in after life to designate that period, all the sins of his youth came thronging into remembrance with harrowing distinctness. In the agony of conviction and remorse for the past he resigned his own will to the will of his Father in heaven, and, in submission thereto, he had attended that meeting, where he had now publicly and solemnly dedicated the temple of his heart to the Lord's service.

When meeting was over he quietly went to his habitation, where he kept much retired for a time. He left the bar, gave up his briefs, put on the attire of the consistent Quaker, and in fervency of spirit sought to fill up his measure of religious duty.[1]

James Gough (born in Kendal, England, 1712), a schoolmaster, and a translator of mystical books, has given an impressive account of his timorous beginning:

Being at a meeting in Youghal [Ireland], my heart was bowed in reverent fear and filled with the sweet influence of God's universal love; it then appeared to be my duty, in the clearness of that Light and strength of that Love, to call and invite those present to come to Christ. *I had been for several years before fully persuaded that this would be required of me as a duty*, and had desired never to dare to venture upon it till it should be required.

The entire meeting time was passed in intense inward debate, his will almost yielding and then again finding ground for the postponement of the dread initiation, until a Friend kneeled down to conclude the meeting in prayer.

"I then saw clearly," he says, "that if the meeting should

[1] *The Friend* (Phila.), vol. xxi. p. 46.

break up without my uttering the exhortation, which was fixed with so much weight upon my mind, I should unavoidably incur the stings of conscious guilt and the crime of disobedience. Therefore, not attending to the Friend's public prayer, my mind was earnestly and closely exercised in mental supplication to the Almighty that He would abilitate me to be faithful. When the prayer was ended I durst not sit down, fearing I should not have the power to rise again in time.[1] Turning about to the meeting, and seeing some of the people staring me in the face, such was my weakness that I raised up my hat, and holding it before my face, I spoke the words which had lain with weight on my mind, and sat down. A flood of divine joy poured into my heart and filled it all the day."[2]

Joseph Oxley (born in Lincolnshire, England, 1715) had a more trying beginning even than this of the message into the hat. He found himself "uncommonly exercised in meetings"; his "disobedience and unfaithfulness" brought him into "a stripped and wilderness state," a condition of "drought and barrenness"; and a succession of visiting Ministers both in public and private opened his life to him and "confirmed his call." Finally, "under a fresh baptism into the service of ministry," he stood up uncovered in meeting, but could bring forth to utterance no words at all. The obedience, however, gave him great relief, and soon after, in another meeting, "a concern came powerfully over" him, and the meeting was "remarkably affected" as he delivered himself of it.[3]

The struggles of these strange beginnings cannot be appreciated or comprehended until one clearly realizes that the "recipient" of the call believes himself to be in every respect like an ancient prophet, a genuine mouthpiece for the Lord. He must not undertake his mission until he was absolutely sure that God has chosen him for it, but on the other hand nothing could be more "awful" than to disobey when God does clearly call for service from him. "Oh, the inexpressible cross it was," William Williams, the pioneer Friend in Tennessee, already quoted, writes in 1800, "to think that I, the least of all

[1] The entire congregation stood during public prayer.
[2] *The Memoirs of James Gough*, pp. 37-39.
[3] *Journal of Joseph Oxley* (in "Friends' Library"), vol. ii. pp. 422-424.

the flock, should be called upon to appear in public;" "but oh, the sweetness I felt when I submitted to His will."[1]

Elias Hicks (born 1748), who as a Quaker youth was very sensitive to inward movings and processes, has given an impressive account of his first venture:

I began to have openings leading to the ministry, which brought me under close exercise and deep travail of spirit. The prospect of opening my mouth in public meetings was a close trial; but I endeavoured to keep my mind quiet and resigned to the heavenly call, if it should be made clear to me to be my duty. Nevertheless, as I was soon after sitting in a meeting, in much weightiness of spirit, a secret though clear intimation accompanied me to speak a few words, which were then given me to utter; yet fear so prevailed that I did not yield to the intimation. For this omission I felt close rebuke, and judgment seemed for some time to cover my mind; but as I humbled myself under the Lord's mighty hand, He again lifted up the light of His countenance upon me, and enabled me to renew covenant with him, that if he would pass by this my offence, I would in future be faithful if he should again require such a service of me. And *it was not long before I felt an impressive concern to utter a few words, which I yielded to in great fear and dread; but oh, the joy and sweet consolation that my soul experienced as a reward for this act of faithfulness; and as I continued persevering in duty and watchfulness, I witnessed an increase in divine knowledge and an enlargement in my gift.*[2]

The call to the ministry of Stephen Grellet was one of the most important events in the Quaker history of the eighteenth century. He was a scion of the French nobility, his father Gabriel de Grellet of Limoges being a friend and counsellor of Louis XVI. Stephen (Etienne) was born in 1773, was carefully educated in the college of the Oratorians in Lyons, and in other Roman Catholic Schools, joined the *Emigrés* in the attempt to stem the French Revolution, and after their overwhelming disasters, he fled to America, first to the West Indies, and then to New York.

In his early youth he had been "favoured with God's

[1] *Journal* (Cincinnati, 1828; Dublin, reprinted 1839), p. 6.
[2] *Journal* of Elias Hicks, pp. 15, 16.

gracious visitations to his soul," but he drifted into the infidelity of the times. He was powerfully reached at the age of twenty-two, by what he calls "the immediate openings of the divine Light on my soul."

"One evening," his autobiography says, "as I was walking in the fields [near Brooklyn, New York] alone, my mind being under no kind of religious concern, nor in the least excited by anything I had heard or thought of, I was suddenly arrested by what seemed to be an awful voice proclaiming the words: Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! It reached my very soul—my whole man shook—it brought me like Saul to the ground."

With the aid of a dictionary he read William Penn's *No Cross, No Crown* which some one had lent him, and he spent much time "in retirement and in silent waiting on God."

Soon after, at the suggestion of an acquaintance, he attended the Friends' Meeting at Newtown on Long Island. Two English Friends, Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young, were present at the meeting, and gave their messages, but it was the silence of the meeting which *found* the young Frenchman:

In the inward silent frame of mind, seeking for the divine Presence, I was favoured to find *in me*, what I had so long and with so many tears sought *without* me. I felt the Lord's power in such a manner that my inner man was prostrated before my blessed Redeemer. A secret joy filled me, in that I had found Him after whom my soul had longed. I was as one nailed to my seat.

This experience was followed by a remarkable interview with the two Quaker women. Deborah Darby seemed to read "the pages of his heart" as though it had been a book, accurately describing his condition.

"My heart was opened," he says. "I felt the power of Him who hath the key of David. No strength to withstand the Divine visitation was left in me. It was indeed a memorable day. I was like one introduced into a new world; the creation and all things around me bore a different aspect—my heart glowed with love to all."

Other memorable meetings followed, when "in the

awful silence" the divine work in his soul progressed, and finally it was borne in upon him that he would be called to proclaim the Truth; "though waiting for clearness," he says, "I was favoured to see that the time was not yet." Steadily the inward pressure grew clearer and more palpable, the preparation ripened, and finally, in 1796, he first "opened his mouth in ministry." "For some days after this act of dedication," he testifies, "my peace flowed as a river, and my eyes were like fountains of tears of gratitude."[1]

When the "recipient" of a call became faithful to what he believed was "the moving of the Spirit," and appeared in public ministry, the Monthly Meeting to which he belonged would generally, in course of time, as his gift for public ministry developed and appeared clear and indubitable, "acknowledge the gift" by recording the individual a Minister. This was often called "recommending" the person. The initial step was taken by the Elders of the meeting, who reported their judgment to the Monthly Meeting. If the Monthly Meeting "acknowledged the gift," the final action was vested in the larger group of the Quarterly Meeting, and the final decision, if affirmative, was reported to the Yearly Meeting.[2] Some of the difficulties attending the laborious stages of being "recommended" come to light in the following incident, connected with the acknowledgment of the gift of Thomas Scattergood of Philadelphia.

In the First month, 1783, the Elders of the meeting he belonged to, called the attention of the meeting to his public appearances as a Minister amongst them. Great unity was expressed with his Gospel Labours, and a proposition was made to acknowledge his gift in the ministry, by "recommending" him to the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders. Some Friends, though uniting with him, yet were not disposed to move along so fast, and proposed that the case should lay over another month for consideration. Others thought that as the meeting had entered into the subject, and had fully and freely expressed its unity with him, the business had better be finished at that

[1] *Memoirs of Stephen Grellet*, edited by Benjamin Seebohm (London, 1860), vol. i. pp. 1-34.

[2] This is the usual American procedure.

time. Some discordant remarks were made, and as the discussion continued, Thomas, who had been sitting under religious exercise, arose, and after premising that though the unity of his Friends was precious to him, yet the time of publicly acknowledging it was of no consequence, proceeded to labour in Gospel power and authority. So remarkably was he favoured, that when he took his seat, the subject of recommending him at that time being revived, not a dissenting voice was heard. It seemed as though the overshadowing of heavenly good attending, was a seal of Divine approval appreciated by all present.[1]

It was the theory of Quaker ministry, and it was a sublimely sacred idea, that every word which the Minister, thus called and prepared, spoke in meeting was a divinely given word. He was not drawing upon his own supplies, he was not communicating what he had excogitated; he was standing as a commissioned herald, and he was speaking as an "oracle."[2] It was, further, not a matter of one's own will and judgment where he should go to speak his message or when he should deliver it. The field of his service was believed to be chosen for him, and indicated to him by revelation in the same mysterious manner as his original call came, and as the words of his message were supplied. The times and seasons and the locality, as well as the material to be spoken, were not to be of human devising but were "opened" to the faithful. It often required weeks and months and even years to mature and ripen "a concern" for a religious visit. The "recipient" of the commission must first of all be inwardly convinced that he was *sent*, and then he must have the unity of his group—larger or smaller according to the scope of the service—before he could launch forth.[3] It was always a time of deep wading, and no one went out until he had suffered much in his effort to discover "the

[1] This incident is taken from Nathan Kite's interesting series of articles on "Thomas Scattergood and his Times," *The Friend* (Phila.), vol. xxiii. p. 56.

[2] The ground for this theory, and the inward struggles which it entailed, have already been considered in a previous chapter.

[3] The "concern" was laid before the Monthly Meeting to which the Minister belonged, and, if approved there, was brought before the larger group of the Quarterly Meeting. In cases of extensive service, the "concern" was laid before the Morning Meeting in London, while in America it was taken to the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders and often to the general Yearly Meeting for its judgment.

putting forth of the divine Hand" and had felt the premonitory "woe of disobedience."

John Churchman, always tender and sensitive to inward currents, relates that "one night in the year 1736, as I lay in bed, my mind was uncommonly affected with the incomes of divine love and life, and therein I had a view of the churches in New Jersey, with a clear prospect that I should visit them." It took more than two years, however, with much "humbling exercise," to test and verify this "clear prospect." At a later time, in 1748, a far greater commission was laid upon him after he had been dwelling for two or three weeks in "inward silence."

"One day," he says, "walking alone, I felt myself so inwardly weak and feeble, that I stood still, and, by the reverence that covered my mind, I knew that the hand of the Lord was on me, and His presence round about: the earth was silent, and all flesh brought into stillness, and light went forth with brightness and shone on Great Britain and Ireland, and Holland, and my mind felt the gentle, yet strongly drawing cords of that love which is stronger than death." "I had," he adds, "seen this journey *fifteen years* in a very plain manner, and at times for ten years thought the concern so strong upon me that I must lay it before my Friends for their advice, but was secretly restrained; being made to believe that an exercise of that sort would ripen best if kept quiet in my own heart, so that I might know the right time, by no means desiring to run without being sent. To see a thing is not a commission to do that thing: the time when, and judgment to know the acceptable time, are the gifts of God."[1]

In 1787 Sarah Grubb (born Tuke, in York, England, 1756), "after a season of deep trial and exercise," felt herself called, "in an extraordinary degree of gospel love," to an extensive religious service on the continent of Europe.[2] While Sarah Grubb's "concern" was ripening, a "call" came to Mary Dudley to be her companion in travel. Mary Dudley had been passing through an alarming illness, but felt herself raised up for a purpose. Sitting one day "in deep attention to the discoveries of

[1] *An Account of the Gospel Labours and Christian Experiences of John Churchman*, pp. 52-54 and pp. 105, 106.

[2] *Life and Religious Labours of Sarah Grubb* (Dublin, 1792), p. 157.

Light," she suddenly felt herself carried, "as in a vision, though perfectly awake and sensible," "to some distant parts, and to a people of a strange language." "A solemn covering spread over" her mind, though she did not understand what the "opening" meant, until Sarah Grubb brought her "proposal" to the Monthly Meeting. Mary Dudley, who was present when the proposal was presented, still disclosed to no one what was working in her mind, though she wept when Sarah Grubb asked her if she had anything on her spirit, and she was "affected to trembling" when her husband once mentioned France. She had seven children at this time, the youngest only ten weeks old, while she herself was in very delicate health. But she followed "the leadings of the holy Hand" and "ventured to move in the awful matter," and the difficult work got accomplished.[1]

In 1793, Thomas Scattergood of Philadelphia (born 1748) was passing through a period of inward preparation for an extensive religious commission in Great Britain. As was the custom with Quaker Ministers, he had long carried the burden of the journey without disclosing to any one what was maturing within him. It was during the terrible epidemic of yellow fever in Philadelphia and Thomas Scattergood with remarkable fearlessness went about visiting the sick and dying, when in the following manner he had his "call" verified.

"I called," he writes in his Diary, "to see dear Rebecca Jones [one of the foremost ministers of the Society in Philadelphia], who lay with her eyes almost closed; and although I spoke to her and took her by the hand, she answered not, which was affecting. After meeting I went again, and on going near the foot of the bed, she said, 'Dear Thomas, I saw thee [alluding to the morning visit], but I could not speak; I am in waiting, there is nothing to do.' She lifted up her hands, and seemed to wish to say more, and several times gave us a look of much sweetness and love; and at length looking up again, she

[1] *Life of Mary Dudley* (London, 1825), pp. 42-72. This journey on the continent, which extended as far as Nîmes in southern France, lasted from February to August 1788. It was one of the most important of the many continental journeys undertaken at this period by Friends.

said, 'Go, and the Lord go with thee.' Being with her again in the afternoon, she said, 'Dear Thomas, if the Master renews thy commission, and should send thee over the water, mind the time and do not deal it out to individuals, but spread it before thy friends, and thou wilt find sympathizers; and when thou gets there, remember the poor servants in families, they are too often neglected—the Lord dealt bountifully with me in that land, and I have had comfortable seasons with such.' I asked her what she had in view in the morning when she looked up at me, and said, go, and the Lord go with thee?—she replied, 'I could not tell thee before J. J., though I love him, but I alluded to thy going over the great waters. The Lord has in some instances entrusted me with His secrets, and I have not betrayed them.' After some more conversation, she appeared inclined to sleep, I left her with much sweetness, and could say in my heart that flesh and blood had not revealed these things unto her, but our heavenly Father for my confirmation and encouragement."[1]

Stephen Grellet's third journey to Europe, perhaps the most important single piece of Quaker itinerant labour in the nineteenth century, is an excellent illustration of the type of "call" which sent the continuous stream of messengers forth on their uncharted journeys. He had only recently returned from a visit of three years (1811–1814) in Europe, during which he travelled by land over twenty-six thousand miles and attended as many meetings as there were days in the period. He was enjoying the peace which followed the accomplishment of such an extensive commission, when suddenly he beheld a field of further labours still more extensive.

The North of Europe, Norway, Sweden, Russia, parts of Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Rome, many parts of Germany and Spain, etc., were brought into view, as portions of the earth where I should have to proclaim the Lord's redeeming love and power. Strong and awful was the impression made on my mind, that I could not enter into my Master's rest till this work was accomplished.[2]

For months he carried this "concern" silently on his mind, but he felt clear, "after waiting carefully on the

[1] *Memoirs of Thomas Scattergood* (London, 1845), p. 122.

[2] His life was despaired of on one occasion before this commission was fulfilled. This was during an extraordinary visit in Haiti in 1816, but he was raised up for his further work.

Lord," that the time for the great journey had not yet come, but that in the meantime he had a work to do in Haiti. Not until 1818 did the command to "go" reach his inner ear.

"The weight of the service which the Lord calls for from me," he writes at the end of 1817, "becomes heavier and heavier; my whole mind is at seasons absorbed by it. . . . Many days and nights I have spent prostrated with much reverence before God; and now, believing that in simple faith and childlike submission, I must commit myself to his Divine requirings, I have found it my place to prepare to follow the Lord."[1]

On his arrival in London, Grellet solemnly informed William Allen, "the Spitalfields genius," who will fill a large place in a later chapter, that it had been impressed on his mind that the Lord designed the latter to be his travelling companion: "that it was he who was to be yoked with me in the Lord's work among the nations." It then appeared that the Lord had independently laid "the same concern" on William Allen. "He felt it before my arrival in this land," Grellet writes. "The weight of it has been at times overwhelming to him. He has so many things that hold him like strong bands that he does not know how he can be released; but the Lord is all-powerful to remove every obstacle."[2] In William Allen's *Life and Correspondence*, it appears that the famous English Friend received a letter 19th February 1818, from Stephen Grellet, in which the latter gave the first information to his "brother beloved" that the great journey was in prospect. Before opening the letter from America William Allen had "a sense of its contents," and from that time until the arrival of Stephen Grellet in London, William Allen had a growing conviction that the Lord had chosen him to accompany "dear S. G."

One of the strangest of the many "calls" that came to the Quaker Ministers of this period was that which sent Daniel Wheeler out on a five-year service among the South Sea and Pacific Islands. He had just returned from an extraordinary piece of work in Russia,

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 329-352. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 356.

where he had spent fourteen years of his life, and in 1832 "the prospect presented itself" for him to "visit in the love of the gospel the inhabitants of some of the islands of the Pacific, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land." He gives the following account of his presentation of his "concern" to the London Morning Meeting:

I then proceeded to state, that my mind had been long preparing, in order to loosen me from every earthly occupation, and to wean me from every social tie, of which I had been blessed with more than an ordinary share; and that . . . my heart was at times filled with the love of God in a remarkable manner; and that in one of those delightful seasons, a prospect was opened before me, the magnitude of which made human nature shrink. But He who had redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with loving-kindness and tender mercies, was graciously pleased to beget in me a willingness to go wheresoever He was pleased to lead. My engagements were at the time such as seemed to preclude the possibility of my being extricated from them for this work; but the pathway was clearly defined, in which as I moved step by step, the mountains became mere mole-hills, and I was at length enabled to lay my concern before my own Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, and that although some relief had been obtained by casting a share of the weight upon the shoulders of my Friends, yet the burden still remained with me day by day, and at intervals in the night season; desiring that a right judgment might be come to, whether this thing was of the Lord or not. After a long pause, it was thought that the Morning Meeting could not set me at liberty, without knowing what I expected to do in those distant parts. To this I replied, that *no specific line of duty was pointed out to me, in this early stage of the business.*

So impressed, however, was the meeting with the reality of Daniel Wheeler's "opening" that even though the statement of his desire to carry a message of love and salvation to the natives and the missionaries and the sailors in these far-away lands was vague and general, he was liberated and supplied with a ship and crew of sailors for the entire journey, lasting from 1833 to 1838.[1]

During the high-water period of itinerant ministry—roughly the quarter-centuries before and after 1800—

[1] *Memoirs of Daniel Wheeler* (London, 1842). The passage quoted is from p. 209.

there was a small host of these Quaker apostles, about equally divided between the two sexes. The procession across the wide-spread Quaker territory was almost uninterrupted, some limiting their field to near-lying Quaker regions, others going beyond seas and covering the entire Quaker map—and more. They could, as we have seen, move only as they were "sent," but they were never quite subjective and capricious in their intimations of duty. Their "concerns" had to be *verified*, "the fleece must be tried both wet and dry," to use their common phrase—and then they must receive the successive endorsement of the meetings to which the recipient of the call belonged. And still further, the itinerant Friend could go forward with his work only as he had "the unity and approval" of the Friends in the localities where his work actually lay. If he "behaved unseemly," or preached "unsound," or unsuitable, doctrine, he could at any moment be held up by the meeting in which he was labouring and handed over to his own meeting. The expense of travel, which often, as in the case of Stephen Grellet, amounted to a large sum of money, was covered by the Minister himself if his financial situation would permit. This was the case with Stephen Grellet. If the person receiving the call were unable to bear the expense of his journeys, the meeting "liberating" him assumed the responsibility of providing it. The labourer received absolutely no financial return for his service; on the contrary, he supported his own family, and generally paid his own way, while he was executing his "commission."[1]

The difficulties and hardships of travel during the period under review, and the sacrifices which itinerant ministry then involved, are almost staggering to us to-day. Under the unescapable pressure of a call, men left their families for years at a time;[2] mothers with unspeakably

[1] When a Friend visited England with a religious concern his travelling expenses and his return journey to America were paid by the Meeting for Sufferings.

[2] George Dillwyn's first European visit lasted seven years and his second visit occupied nine years.

tender hearts kissed their tiny babes and went off on perilous journeys. Frederic and Henry Seebohm have left a vivid account of what the absence of their father, Benjamin Seebohm, meant during the long years of his itinerant service. They give an affecting picture of the separation when their father started from his home in England for America:

> When in October the time of departure [for America] came, we were summoned home from school. Never shall we forget his solemn and touching farewell sermon at meeting on the last Sunday morning; the sorrowful evening, when it was so hard to all to be cheerful; the next morning, when the carriage came to bear him away; the long embrace between him and our mother; the wave of his handkerchief, as he drove out of sight; and how we, the mother and weeping children, were left alone with a sense of blank which was to last for years.[1]

They touch tenderly upon the inward pain which these separations cost their mother:

> If these absences were so damping to our youthful spirits, what must they have been to our Mother's? We knew that she felt them keenly, however bravely she bore up under them. We saw her tears at parting. We knew what it was to her to count the days before he left, and then to have to count the weeks, and sometimes months, before his return. But we did not know half the trials and anxieties which saddened her brow and wore upon her strength and spirits. We did not estimate at half its real bitterness the cup she was drinking, or the brave self-sacrifice which she was so often making. We did not know then that before their marriage the cost of these repeated separations had been counted and cheerfully yielded.[2]

Sarah Harrison (born Richards, in Pennsylvania in 1748), who was a remarkable character in her day, was called out on very long and arduous journeys, and she suffered deeply, in her extended periods of absence, over the condition of her family left behind, especially over her children who needed a mother's guidance. "I think much," she wrote in 1789, "about my dear children, desiring that they may be preserved from evil and kept out of the streets as much as possible." In 1792 she

[1] *Private Memoirs of B. and E. Seebohm*, edited by their sons (London, 1873), p. 47.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 36.

went overseas on an extensive religious mission which lasted to the end of the century, and all those eight years she was separated from her dear home group.

The "testimony" on the life and labours of Patience Brayton contains this touching reference to the inward cost of separation from home and family:

> Notwithstanding her exercise was great, and her conflicts many and proving; the infant state of her family seeming to require her nursing attention, with the exercise of parting with a beloved weakly husband, cast painful reflections on her mind, yet that Arm that was laid bare for her delivery from her early captivity, and sustained her hitherto, was pleased again to perfect obedience to his requirings, and supported her through many hardships and discouragements in the course of this journey. In her absence, one of her children was taken away by death, and another soon after her return, in which trial she manifested resignation of mind, and acknowledged the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be his worthy name.[1]

Sea voyages seem an easy matter to most of us now, but in the days of the old sailing-ship one thought twice before taking passage. There were dreary weeks of sailing even under the most favourable conditions. The fluctuations of weather counted then as they do not now. The voyager was terribly exposed. The ship was more than likely to leak, and the food-supplies frequently ran low. There were actual pirates to be reckoned with, who had a real existence outside of story-books; and in the periods of war, which were almost continuous, there was the constant hazard of capture; and finally, there were certain contagious diseases, such as smallpox, yellow fever and "putrid fever," which the traveller might expect to meet at any time. Friends often carried their own food-supplies, and they refer occasionally to their stock of live animals, which were killed as they were needed on the voyage. A list of Thomas Story's supplies for the journey from Barbados to England included five sheep, seven turkeys, five hogs, thirty-two fowls and eleven ducks.[2]

[1] *Life and Labours*, p. iv.

[2] See *Journal of Friends' Hist. Soc.* vol. iii. p. 105.
The following is a list of Sea Stores put on board by J. A. for our worthy

We get some idea of how expensive a sea journey was in the eighteenth century in an entry of the London Meeting

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Friends, Samuel Fothergill, Mary Peisly, and Katherine Payton, at Philadelphia, ye 2nd of 6 mo., 1756.

In the Box No. 2 is a Jarr of Sweatmeats, a Jarr of Ditto Ginger, 2 Jarrs of Preserved Cranberries, one of Preserved Quinces, 2 of Preserved Damsons, 2 of Currant Jellies, one of Rasberries, one of Apricock Marmalade, a bottle of pickled Onions, 2 Bottles of other Pickels, a Bottle of Capers, one of Mustard, one of Olives, one of Kethup, a Jarr of preserved Black Cherries, 2 Baggs of Pruins, a Bag of Sago, 4 Bottles of Bitters, Cinnamon, Mace, Cloves, Nutmegs, and Ginger, several papers of Different Seeds—as Fennel, Carroway, sweat Margorum, Cammomoil, penneroyal. Sugar Candy, Mint, & Thime, & ground Pepper, & I believe a Bottle of Kyan Pepper for present Use.

There is a bag of Barly in one of the Chests.

In the Womens Chest is a pot of Eggs, a Bagg with Dryed Cherries, 2 Baggs of Raisons, a Bagg of Rye Meal, one of Rice, one of Indian Corn Meal, 2 Bottles of Pensylvania Coffee, 4 lbs. Chocolate, a Bag of Rusk, a Pott of Butter for the Table Use, 2 Cheeses, hard soap, 2 loaves of Sugar, 2 Quart Bottles of Kyan Pepper, some almonds, a Bagg of Cinnamon Cake, a Bagg of Naple Biscake, Currans, Dryed Apples, Ditto Peaches, a Bottle of preserved Fox Grapes, a Jarr of Honey, one of Red Cherries, a Cannister of Bohea Tea, Sugar Plumbs, Marmolet, a Cannister of Green Tea, 2 Tin Chocolate Pots, 2 Chamber Pots Pewter, Balm, Sage, summer Savoury, hore hound, Tobacco, & Oranges—2 bottles of brandy, 2 Do of Jamaica Spirrit, A Cannister of green tea, a Jar of Almond paste, Ginger bread.

In Samuel Fothergills new Chest :—a Pott of Eggs, a Bagg of Buckweat Meal, a bagg of Muscovado Sugar, one of Rusk, one of Oatmeal, a Cheshire Chease, a loaf of Sugar, dried Quinces, Reasons, Plumb Cake, 2 Bottles of Pensylvania Coffee, one of Kyan Pepper, one with Dryed Cherries, a Canister of Bohea Tea, hard soap, 2 pound Chocolate, a piece of Dried Veal, a bottle of Pensylvania Coffee ground, Marmolade, Tobacco, 2 Baggs of Naple Biscuit, Balm, Dryed Quinces, & peaches, Cittron, & Orange Tansey.

In a Hamper is 6 gammons of Bacon, 10 Tongs, 2 hams of Venison, a p$^{s}$ of dried beef.

In a Barr$^{l}$ No 1 is 3 doz. port wine & 9 pint bottles of best Canary.

A Cask of Indian Corn for the Stock, 3 Cags of Milk bread, 2 tubbs of butter a box of pipes, a Cag of Mollosses, & an empty cag to brew in, half a barr$^{l}$ of Cyder, 5 doz. Do, 2 half barr$^{ls}$ of Ale, a Cag with Yeast to brew in, 2 Cags of Rum, a Cag of Madera wine.

3 Shoats, 6 doz. & 3 fowls—A Milch Goat.

In another Hamper: 1 doz. fountainiac, 1 doz. Lisbon, Bristol water, Metheglin, &c.

In a Box No. 3 :—a pott of Orange peel Marmolett, a Jarr of Cranberrys for Tarts, 2 Jarrs of Mangoe, 2 bottles of Goosberries, a pott of preserved Cherries, Cranberry Jam, Curain Jelly, 3 pint bottles of Cinnamon, Citron and orange flower water, a bottle of Lavender, one of Rose, and one of Pennyroyall water, a bottle of bitters, white Currain wine, Matheglin, preserved damsons, and a small Strainer.

9 bottles of white wine vinegar in ye locker on board.

A Case of bottles filled with Brandy & Jamaica Spiritts.

2 Matrosses.

A hamper directed "Stores for the Fr$^{ds}$."

No. 1 Contains 20 bottles Cherry Rum, 6 bottles of Brandy, 12 bottles Porter, A bag of dried Peaches, Ditto Summer Savoury.

Another Hamper No. 2 :—3 doz. best Porter, and 3 doz. Madera Wine.

Sent down in the Pilott boat :—Some Lemmons, Onions, &$^{c}$ horse reddish, also a Rump of Alomode beef (*Journal of Friends' Hist. Soc.* vol. ii. pp. 94-96).

for Sufferings for the passage and accommodation of Samuel Emlen of Philadelphia and Thomas Thornbrough of New York. The bill amounted to £63.[1]

Martha Routh gives a description of an ocean experience, occurring in 1794, which vividly shows what the traveller of those days might expect. She was on the ship *Barclay*, bound for Boston. Samuel Emlen of Philadelphia and William Rotch of New Bedford, Massachusetts, were returning to America on the same ship with her.

On sixth day morning, twenty-ninth, when about to rise, our quietude was interrupted by information, that a ship, about three miles to windward, had made a signal of distress; and on its nearer approach, appeared to have lost part of the mainmast. Our Captain laid to in order to let her come up with us, with the humane intention of rendering assistance, which disposition I could not but commend, when men are at peace with one another; but at a time like this, I thought it required great clearness of judgment to know what was best to be done; and the little I felt, was entirely against stopping to aid that vessel: as it was possible that not only such appearance, and the signal that was given, but much more, might be done treacherously to decoy. When the Captain perceived it was a ship of war with two tier of guns, he hoisted sail to make the best of his way, and their conduct did not bear a kind aspect, for they fired after us four times; twice the balls came so near, as to be heard whistling along the water.[2]

Daniel Wheeler gives an account of a close encounter and a mysterious deliverance off the coast of South America in 1834:

At sunset a brig was seen upon our lee quarter, steering the same course as ourselves, perhaps three or four miles distant from us; she was soon covered up by the night and no more thought of. Being upon the deck (a usual practice with me the fore-part of the night) between nine and ten o'clock, the carpenter suddenly exclaimed, "Why here's the brig!" Upon looking, I saw the vessel at a considerable distance from us; but soon perceived by the stars, that she was approaching with uncommon rapidity in a most suspicious direction, as if intending to cross our fore-foot, and cut us off. We watched her very

[1] *Journal of Friends' Hist. Soc.* vol. iii. p. 18. [2] *Memoirs*, p. 66.

narrowly, expecting every minute she would fire upon us. She continued to haul directly across our head at a very short distance from us; but we steadily kept our course, without the slightest variation or manifesting any symptoms of hurry or fear, or noticing her in any way. I felt our situation to be at the moment very critical, knowing that these latitudes, and particularly this neighbourhood, are exceedingly infested with piratical vessels, which find shelter in the Brazilian harbours as traders, where they fit out occasionally for Africa with merchandize, and return with whole cargoes of oppressed Africans for sale, landing them on private parts of the Brazil coast; at other times, they act as pirates, when it suits their convenience, or they are in want of stores. This was indeed a trial of faith of no common kind; but my mind was staid upon the Lord, feeling a good degree of resignation to His Holy will, whatever might be permitted to befall us. After watching the vessel with anxiety for some time, she passed away, without making the least apparent stop.[1]

A brief passage in the *Journal* of Catharine Phillips reveals some of the difficulties that beset the women travellers in the inns of the eighteenth century:

Lodged at a very poor lonely Scotch inn upon a chaff bed; our bed-room a ground floor, and no fastening on the door; and there being men in the house drinking, we were not quite easy with our situation, but through divine favour, we went to sleep, and were preserved from harm.[2]

The same *Journal* gives an account of an itinerant mission in the Carolinas and Virginia in the winter of 1753–1754 which must have been excessively hard to endure. One item, taken almost at a venture, will show the way the party got on:

The morning was wet when we set out [to go from Pedee River to the Waters of the Haw River] and I was very poorly; but in a little time the weather cleared up, and I grew better. We rode that day about forty miles through the woods without seeing any house; and at night took up our lodgings in the woods, by the side of a branch or swamp, which afforded plenty of canes for our horses. Our Friends made us a little shed of the branches of pine-trees, on a rising sandy ground, which

[1] *Journal*, pp. 251, 252. He gives an interesting account of the reason for the failure of the pirate ship to attack them.

[2] *Journal*, p. 200.

abounded with lofty pines. We made a large fire, and it being a calm, fair moon-light night, we spent it cheerfully though we slept but little. Our saddles were our pillows, and we had in company a man who came from Pedee and was going a part of our next day's journey, *whose wife had sent a blanket*, which with one our Friends had brought, being thrown at our backs upon our shed, sheltered us much; so that we still saw kind Providence cared for us! In the morning we pursued our journey, and went that day about forty-five miles; and at night took up our lodging again in the woods, but did not meet with so advantageous a spot as the night before, for the ground was wet and the shelter bad, and poor wood for firing. The weather also being very cold, and my companion ill with a pain in her face, and myself but poorly, we spent the night very uncomfortably as to the body, but through divine favour were preserved quiet and resigned in spirit.[1]

Patience Brayton in her travels often underwent great inconveniences and passed through experiences which would seem to us to-day almost unendurable. She took them as a matter of course and, as Friends used to say, "quietly exercised her situation." Here is a brief account of one of her "exercising situations":

1st month 1st, 1772, attended Deep River Meeting [North Carolina] which was silent to us. Next day set out for South Carolina, rode forty miles to Salisbury, and the day following forty more to Charlottetown, where there was a rude company collected for a dance at the court-house, who had bespoke all the lodgings, but being furnished with a chaff bed by the fire, I rested well, and my heart was thankful, to see all things made easy to me. Next day, after riding thirty-three miles, we had only the floor to lie upon, where we gained some rest.[2]

The account of William Savery's visit in 1793 among the Indians in north-western New York and what is now the State of Ohio is full of serious dangers and hairbreadth escapes. One or two passages will indicate the character of the experiences through which the little party of Friends passed:

In the evening, two Indian canoes having come down from Detroit, each having a keg of rum, some of our new visitors [Indians] got drunk, and came into our camp, just as we were

[1] *Journal*, p. 212.

[2] *Life and Labours*, p. 29.

going to bed, making a great noise, and going from tent to tent. Much persuasion being used, I at length prevailed on the worst one to let me lead him away some distance: he frequently called me brother, and seemed pleased with my attention; but after I returned, it appeared to me to have been a very dangerous undertaking, as he had a long knife at his side, which he had before drawn out and brandished in our camp; but Providence preserved me.

First-day, the 1st of Ninth month, sailed down the river St. Lawrence, and passed a fort on the American side, and also two Indian towns, one of them on an island. In the evening, after passing through the greatest number of islands I ever saw in a river, which are called the Thousand Islands, and also through a long rapid, we arrived at Lake St. Francis. The wind being fresh, it was doubtful whether we could cross it or not in the night; but our Canadians concluded to venture on, we all laid down as in the preceding night. The lake is about fifteen miles long and six broad. I slept none; the clouds appeared wild and threatening for a night voyage. About ten o'clock the helmsman seeing a gust rising, roused all up; and in a few minutes a terrible hurricane came on, with tremendous lightning and thunder, and very dark; but by the flashes of the lightning, we judged we were about a mile or a mile and a half from shore. The rain poured down in torrents, and it appeared almost a hopeless attempt to reach the shore; but some of our company, possessing considerable fortitude and skill, were active in directing and encouraging the men to persevere in rowing—notwithstanding all which, such was the impetuosity of the waves and violence of the winds, added to a deluge of rain and perpetual thunder and lightning, that one of our best hands threw down his oar, and cried out in French, "We shall all perish,—we shall all perish!" But Providence, whose tender mercies were over us, had more gracious designs concerning us, and at length brought us safe to shore, which happily proved to be sandy, or we might still have been dashed to pieces. Having a piece of painted cloth on board, as many of us as could got under it, as it continued to rain very hard. About twelve o'clock it cleared away, and, being very cold, we concluded to go on shore, and walk about to warm ourselves, being thoroughly wet, and shivering with the cold. It was thought impossible to kindle a fire, as everything was so wet; but one of our Friends striking to light our pipes, we were enabled to kindle one, which was a great relief to us, and sitting round it till daylight, were enabled to prepare something for breakfast, and set sail again. I believe all of us were thankful for our deliverance. The man who was

most intimidated had a consecrated wafer about his neck to preserve him from drowning, but his faith failed him in the hour of trial.[1]

The account of Mary Pryor's voyage to America in 1797 is hardly a sample narrative, but it nevertheless very well presents the confidence in their guidance which these travelling Ministers maintained even in the gravest perils. Before taking passage, Friends often visited a ship and sat down in silence to *feel* whether they were *clear* to go in it, and whether they had direction to embark. Mary Pryor took this course. Her biographer says :

Before Mary Pryor decided in what vessel to sail for America, she visited several of the best ships of the period; but she did not feel easy to take her passage in any of them. However, on sitting down in an inferior vessel called the *Fame*, she said that she felt "so comfortable," that she must go in that ship. Her son William, who was an underwriter at Lloyd's, tried to dissuade her, having learned that the ship was considered unseaworthy; and a relative, named Thomas Backhouse, posted from London to Hertford, to warn her against it. On his telling her that he would not trust one of his dogs in it, she asked for a time of quiet, in which to seek the Lord's direction in the matter. She saw no light, however, upon any change of plan, and her place was taken in the *Fame*.[2]

On the voyage the ship leaked furiously, and after many weeks of pumping it became evident that the seamen could not keep her afloat. At this juncture, *i.e.* when rescue seemed hopeless, Mary Pryor came out of her cabin early one morning, with a cheerful countenance, saying that she had "good news for the ship's company, for their deliverance was near at hand." She told them that she had had a vision, in which she had seen a vessel coming to their help that very day, but that they must still use every exertion to keep the ship afloat till she should come in sight. This announcement was made, as was narrated by a fellow-passenger, with evident

[1] *Journal*, pp. 69 and 78. During these experiences William Savery was desperately ill.

[2] *Mary Pryor*, by Mary Pryor Hack, p. 53.

confidence that it would be fulfilled in their experience. Mary Pryor further said that the name of the vessel had been told her and she had forgotten it, but if the female passengers would mention their maiden names, it would recall it to her memory. The women on board were summoned, and one of the steerage passengers, who seems to have been acting as stewardess, said that her name had been Archibald. "That," said Mary Pryor, "is the name of the ship that will save us."[1] A few hours later a small schooner of sixty tons burden, named the *Archibald*, from Halifax, laden with codfish and already short of water, overhauled the *Fame* and took its passengers aboard. Their condition was still perilous, but the *Archibald* finally brought Mary Pryor and her friends safely into Philadelphia.[2]

It would be possible to fill an entire book with instances of remarkable "leadings" and "openings" which marked the lives of these itinerant Ministers. They *saw*, or seemed to *see*, the inner state and condition of persons before them. They were gifted with unusual insight for understanding situations. They were more telepathic than the rank and file of the membership were. They may have had a good many "misses" in their predictions and impressions which they have not reported to us, but they surely did have a good many "hits" of which they have told us. George Dillwyn of Philadelphia (b. 1738, d. 1830) is authority for the following incident of an American Minister who had this strange "leading" while on his voyage home by sailing-vessel. Being on his return home to America, near to the coast of Ireland, in very hazy weather, he was awakened by an uneasiness of mind and a strong impression that the ship was in danger. He roused the master, who also lay in the cabin, and requested him to go up and see how things were; but the captain, not liking the disturbance, told the Friend to make himself easy, they would take care

[1] *Mary Pryor*, by Mary Pryor Hack, p. 65.

[2] An independent account is given in the *Memoirs of Rebecca Jones*, pp. 246-248.

enough of him. The Friend tried to compose himself, and refrained from speaking again for some time: the uneasiness, however, continuing, and becoming more urgent, he cried with great earnestness, "Captain, thou must get up." The captain, with some grumbling, at length complied; and, in ascending the companion-way, roused the attention of the helmsman, who, as well as the seamen near the forecastle, were supposed to be dozing. This man calling to the others, they presently exclaimed: "Helm, hard alee! there's a light ahead!" On immediately sounding, they found themselves in shallow water, and dropped anchor, where, the weather being mild, they remained till the next morning, when to their surprise it appeared they were near the shore, and that if they had continued their course but a few minutes longer, the vessel at least would probably have been lost.

During George Dillwyn's last sojourn in England he became closely attached, as a father in the Truth, to Susanna Horne, a young woman then just coming forth in the ministry. In the year 1812 she came to America on a religious visit, and George had much unity with her in her ministerial labours. A few weeks after Susanna had sailed for home, George Dillwyn rose at the close of a meeting for worship in Burlington, and in much brokenness and humility said, "As many Friends are interested in Susanna Horne, I may tell them, she has arrived safely in England." This announcement was startling to all—and the weak in faith were no doubt full of fears lest the slowly revolving weeks should not bring its confirmation. But time proved that George had been enabled to follow her in spirit even to her port, and was made sensible, although at three thousand miles distance, of her landing.

Samuel Emlen of Philadelphia (b. 1730, d. 1799) was considered by many in his day to be a *seer*. He was remarkably favoured with insight into character and conditions of life, and he was so unerring in his revelations that many persons were afraid to meet him

for fear that he would see through them and uncover the secrets of their lives. There are many anecdotes told of the spirit of discernment which characterized Samuel Emlen, of which the following are good examples. A valuable Friend, a member of another Monthly Meeting, paying a visit to Philadelphia, brought his son with him. The young man, having heard that Samuel Emlen could see into the inward state and condition of those he was with, was particularly desirous of avoiding an interview, having, as he thought, sufficient reasons for not liking to be seen just as he was. The father attended the Northern District Meeting to which Samuel Emlen belonged, and the son could not refuse to accompany him, although he felt no little fear at the prospect of being in the same house with this discerner of spirits. He kept, however, as far from the gallery as possible, and felt comforted at the close of the meeting that he had so far escaped a public rebuke. But he soon found cause of fresh uneasiness, for Samuel Emlen kept close to his father, and said when the latter accepted an invitation to dine with William Savery, "I will go along." Dinner passed sociably and pleasantly, and when the company afterwards gathered into the parlour, the young man took the farthest corner of the room from the spot where the object of his dread had located himself. All his plannings, however, were in vain. Soon Samuel fell into silence, and the word of exhortation and reproof was put into his mouth. He addressed himself at once to the trembling youth with such a soul-searching testimony as unveiled all that the latter most wished to be hidden. But there was consolation as well as rebuke in the testimony, and holy resolutions were awakened, which through the Lord's assistance were measurably kept.

A Friend, who was a valuable Elder in Philadelphia, when young in years, went with a stranger somewhat advanced in life to pay Samuel Emlen a visit. While sitting together Samuel fell into silence, became religiously exercised and soon began to preach powerfully to the state of some person young in years. There were but

three persons in the room, and the youthful Elder knew that the communication was fitted to no one of them. He became nervous and uneasy. He thought his spiritually gifted friend had for once made a mistake. At last, as Samuel continued his discourse, his uneasiness became so great he could no longer retain his seat. He arose and quietly approached the half-opened door to make his escape, when he perceived standing behind it in the adjoining room a young man weeping bitterly. Relieved of all his faithless fears, the Elder returned to his seat.

Samuel Emlen and his friend George Dillwyn often travelled together in great spiritual oneness, it being their lot many times in Europe as well as America to be led to the same meetings and to labour in harmonious exercise. At one time, whilst they were sitting together in a meeting in London, in which George Dillwyn had been under great concern of mind in a feeling that he was preparing for religious service but knew not where it was to be performed, Samuel turned round to him and said, as if answering a question, "Thou must go with me to Holland." He who had been fitting George for the labour had prepared Samuel for a similar work and unfolded to him the service to which they were called. The whole matter was now clear to both—they joined together, and, with the unity of their Friends, visited the land whereto they were called, to their own peace and the edification of the gathered Church and many other seeking minds there.[1]

It is obvious from what has already been presented, and it is far more obvious to one who has read these Journals and Memoirs in bulk, that the itinerant Ministers were drawn almost exclusively from one psychological type. They were all persons of the class to which mystics and prophets belong. They, as we have seen, were conscious of divine intimations from early childhood;

[1] These incidents out of the life of Samuel Emlen and George Dillwyn are taken, slightly changed, from Nathan Kite's articles entitled "Thomas Scattergood and his Times," *The Friend* (Phila.), vol. xxi.

their conversion and call seemed to them the direct work of God wrought immediately upon them; their "mission" appeared to be laid upon them as distinctly as upon the Hebrew prophets of old; they spoke only when they felt themselves *moved*, and they delivered only what they believed was *given* to them. They considered themselves the objects of peculiar providential care and guidance. They were not surprised when extraordinary deliverances came to them or when ways were made where there seemed no way, for that had always been God's method with His messengers. They implicitly trusted interior impressions whose origin they could not trace to any known source in consciousness, and thus throughout this long period almost all Quaker ministry was unmeditated and spontaneous, *i.e.* of the *prophetic* type.[1]

The remarkable thing about this ministry was, not that the Ministers exhibited such implicit faith, but that it *worked*, that it was actually constructive. In the language of St. Paul it "edified." The men and women who were called, it must be realized, were rare and unusual persons. They often lacked the power, which comes with intellectual development, to think problems

[1] They sometimes found life-companions selected for them by this same providential care and guidance. I give one instance, though many might be given.

Benjamin Ferris in his *Journal* thus describes his movements relative to marrying. "The 13th of Third month [1765] I went to our Monthly Meeting;—there I unexpectedly saw Hannah, the daughter of James Brown, on whose account during my late journey my mind had frequently been employed in deep thoughtfulness and in fervent cries to my heavenly Father that I might know and do his will in the weighty affair of proposing marriage to her. I was afraid of making haste, so withheld an intimation of my affectionate regard for her, yet I believed from what I felt that the time for manifesting it drew near; and was sincere in my desires to be directed both how and when to proceed in so important an engagement.

"Sixth month 1st.—It was now ripened in my mind to go and see my dear friend Hannah Brown, having the free consent of my parents. I set off composed in mind, under some sense of the weight of the occasion of my journey, and reached her father's house in the Great Valley that evening. Having a suitable opportunity with him and his wife, I let them know the occasion of my being there, and that I thought parents had a right timely to know any intentions of that sort, and therefore I mentioned it to them for their concurrence. Next day, being First-day, I went with the family to Uwchlan Meeting, which to me was rather comfortable than otherwise; and the day following I returned home, feeling a peaceful settlement of mind. On looking back at my progress and the several steps I had taken in this matter, it afforded me solid satisfaction."

through logically, but they had for the most part striking native capacity, that indescribable thing which is called *gift*, a certain quality of grace, a kind of unerring accuracy of intuition, and withal a covering of the divine presence which gave them power far beyond the actual avoirdupois weight of their words. They were, speaking generally, persons of radiant and saintly life. They showed the fact of communion with God in their faces, and they succeeded, to an unusual degree, in refining and purifying their natures in the desire to be "stainless mirrors for their God." These men and women are striking illustrations of the fact that *life* speaks louder than words. They often were unlettered. For the most part they knew little history and less literature. They had no training in theology, and no skill in homiletics. They spoke generally with a rhythmical intonation which would make their preaching seem odd and quaint, if not ridiculous, to us to-day. But in spite of all this they actually moved men when they spoke; they convicted sinners and they aroused the careless and indifferent. They made God seem real, and Christ a mighty attractive power, and eternity an affair big with destiny to men like us. They went out with timorous humility as to their fitness for the great service, but they came back bringing large sheaves of harvest for their labour.

Their mission was a two-fold one. Primarily, it was to build up and perfect the "Society," which for them was the true Church of Christ, the precious and peculiar Israel of God; and, secondarily, it was to proclaim their great gospel message to the wider world out beyond their fold. They saw, as the rank and file did not see, the real significance of the Quaker faith; they understood through long meditation why the founders had suffered for their Truth; they quietly felt themselves called out to live absolutely for the *cause*; they were so impressed with the preciousness of the inheritance that they faced with joy any sacrifice whatever which was involved in carrying it on untarnished. They were quick to note in the membership signs of conformity to the world or to other forms of

Christian faith, while they, on the contrary, kept the gaze steadily focussed on the distinct and differentiated Quaker peculiarities, and on the spiritual ideals of their Society. Wherever they went they were the bearers of the ideal. They saw, like earlier prophets, the signs of the times, the ominous tendencies toward backsliding and degeneracy, the deviations from the days of the fathers, the subtle contaminations of the world, and the insidious lure of false lights. They struck their finger on the place that was ailing, and they pleaded with intensity of passion for the preservation of the pure and glorious Truth which they believed God had especially opened, in a new dispensation of grace, to the fathers of Quakerism.[1] Stern with themselves, they were also stern with their hearers. They would have nothing to do with compromise, they were determined to hew to the line, and, as we shall see, it was the itinerant Ministers who drew the lines which differentiated "Quakerism," and marked it off from other types of Christianity. They created its ideals, they keyed the body up to its task of keeping the discipline pure at all costs, and, finally, most important of all their services, they *discovered* and mustered out the young recruits who in turn became their spiritual successors in the work of ministry.

The most effective method employed by these Ministers for the construction of the Society was not public ministry—important as that was—it was rather *family visiting*.[2] In this function of visiting families two great influences came into constant play. First, the

[1] Sarah (Tuke) Grubb writes in 1785: "We had deeply to lament the low declined state of the professors of truth [*i.e.* Friends] not only as to numbers but in a departure from the precious, preserving principle of light and life," p. 95.

[2] John Comly (born in Pennsylvania, 1773), recording the experiences of his visit through New England in 1815, puts the work of visiting families in importance before the work of preaching. He had arrived in Boston where there was at the time no Quaker Meeting, and sitting in his lodging-house, Comly *feels* that there might be one built out of the scattered "seed of Jacob" in the city, *i.e.* out of the mystically inclined persons scattered throughout the region. "In the evening," he writes, "my mind was impressed with a belief that there is in Boston a remnant of the seeking seed of Jacob, and if sought out and visited in their lonely abodes, might be encouraged and brought forward to profess the Truth [*i.e.* to become Friends]. It appeared to me that a private labour of love in this way would be more likely to be useful in gathering this seed, than the holding of large public meetings." *Journal of John Comly* (Phila., 1853), pp. 191, 192.

social-group influence was always in powerful operation. The visitor went from family to family. He got acquainted with all the members. He brought into every home the silent force of his personality, and the suggestive influence of his ideals. His coming on important meeting days was the occasion of a large group-dinner, when, in intimate fellowship and in personal narrative fashion, the truth of his message and the formative power of his personality penetrated more deeply into the life of the company even than in the more solemn time of the meeting.

But even more far reaching and transforming than the social-group influence of these itinerants was the work they accomplished in what came to be called family "opportunities." These "opportunities" were religious meetings or "sittings," in which the entire family was gathered to wait in silence until the Lord should *open* to the visitor His message to the family. They were extraordinarily solemn occasions. The hush was intense, for everybody believed that the message that was to follow was being there infused by the divine Spirit into the soul of the trembling, palpitating Minister, who was plainly being prepared before their eyes. It was generally supposed, too, that this visitor who had been sent to their home was a prophet, could see into "states," and could announce the will and purpose of the Lord for them. When he began speaking the message opened with some fundamental principle of spiritual religion, led up to the mission of the Society, the call to faithfulness, the need for dedication, and then, suddenly, the solemn communication grew specific. This particular family was called to face its duty in the work of the Lord, or was summoned to a searching examination of its life. Not uncommonly some member of the little group was selected out by name, and had his heart "searched as with candles," or he was told what the Lord was preparing for him in the unfolding of time. When the "opportunity" was over there were often wet eyes in the group, and not seldom someone's interior life had been permanently reshaped.

The intense labour and travail of spirit which this work of family-visiting cost the Minister are quite beyond description. Joyous, happy occasions they often had as they entered home after home in their journeying and pleasant dinner groups gathered in the capacious hospitable homes of prosperous Friends—but the mission laid on the souls of these itinerants came before everything else, and their "concern for the seed of God" made their days of visiting tremendously serious times. Sarah Grubb (born Lynes, 1773) has given an excellent impression of the way one felt in the midst of the work:

To sit in families under a sense of religious duty, and while assuming the character of a gospel messenger, is indeed *an awful thing*. I feel it so, even increasingly, the more I am engaged in it, and the longer I continue in the sacred office of a Minister of Christ; so that I seemed a little prepared to sympathize with thee, my dear, in thy early going forth in this way. I trust it tended to unburden and strengthen thy own mind, while some enlargement in the precious gift committed to thee has resulted from the dedication; and that the minds of the visited have been made sensible of the renewed offers of our Heavenly Father's love.[1]

Sarah (Tuke) Grubb, who, according to the testimony of her own Monthly Meeting, "was a woman of extraordinary natural abilities, strength of judgment and clearness of discernment," and who was certainly as sensitive in spirit as a downy feather to a breeze, has left this account of her state of mind—"that of a weaned child"—as, with a companion in ministry, she travelled in her early life up and down England, visiting families and attending meetings:

As I make no doubt it will be acceptable to thee to hear from two poor pilgrims who are almost worn out with things that appear too mighty for them, I just embrace a little vacant time, to hint how we have fared; and may in the first place say that

[1] *A Selection from the Letters of the late Sarah Grubb (formerly Sarah Lynes)* (Sudbury, 1848), p. 248. This Friend did an immense amount of family-visiting. She wrote in 1802: "My time has not been mine own for years past, nor do I feel it so yet, notwithstanding the family visits closed yesterday. I have had, since coming home, three hundred and thirty-seven sittings of this kind," p. 106.

the present engagement hath been the most trying of the kind we ever experienced. It hath been frequently our lot to go down as to the bottom of the mountains, where the earth with her bars was about us; under this pressure our minds have been secretly clad with sackcloth and deep mourning, when it has evidently appeared that the pure life of religion is in a state of bondage, and that it sensibly utters the language, "I am oppressed under you, as a cart with sheaves." To visit this seed of the kingdom we find to be no light matter, especially when hid under the briars and thorns, and then plumed with human wisdom; who indeed is sufficient for these things?[1]

Thomas Clarkson in his *Portraiture of Quakerism* has given a very good account of these "opportunities":

In the company of the Quakers a circumstance sometimes occurs of so peculiar a nature that it cannot be well omitted in this place. It sometimes happens that you observe a pause in the conversation. This pause continues. Surprised at the universal silence now prevailing, you look round, and find all the Quakers in the room apparently thoughtful. The history of the circumstance is this. In the course of the conversation the mind of some one of the persons present has been so overcome with the weight or importance of it, or so overcome by inward suggestions or other subjects, as to have given himself up to meditation or to passive obedience to the impressions upon his mind. This person is soon discovered by the rest on account of his particular silence and gravity. From this moment the Quakers in the company cease to converse. They become habitually silent, and continue so, both old and young, to give the apparently meditating person an opportunity of pursuing uninterruptedly the train of his own thoughts. Perhaps, in the course of his meditations, the subject that impressed his mind gradually dies away and expires in silence. In this case you find him resuming his natural position and returning to conversation with the company as before. It sometimes happens, however, that, in the midst of his meditations, he feels an impulse to communicate to those present the subject of his thoughts and breaks forth, seriously explaining, exhorting, and advising, as the nature of it permits and suggests. When he has finished his observations, the company remain silent for a short time, after which they converse again as before. Such a pause, whenever it occurs in the company of the Quakers, may be considered as a devotional act. For the subject which occasions it is always of a serious or

[1] *Life*, p. 34.

religious nature. The workings in the mind of the meditating person are considered either as the offspring of a solemn reflection upon that subject, suddenly and almost involuntarily as it were produced by duty, or as the immediate offspring of the agency of the Spirit. And an habitual silence is as much the consequence as if the person present had been at a place of worship. It may be observed, however, that such pauses seldom or never occur in ordinary companies or where Quakers ordinarily visit one another. When they take place, it is mostly when a Minister is present and when such a Minister is upon a religious visit to families of a certain district. In such a case such religious pauses and exhortations are not unfrequent. A man, however, may be a hundred times in the company of the Quakers and never be present at one of them, and never know indeed that they exist at all.[1]

The second feature of their work as they travelled about was the presentation of their gospel—the "Truth," as they called it—to those outside the "Society." They represented, though with a marked slowing down of zeal, the continuation of that immense passion for propagation which characterized the Quakers in the early flush of their discovery. They frequently appointed public meetings in communities which they visited, especially in the unsettled regions of America, and in these meetings they gave a kind of laboratory exhibition of the Quaker method and the Quaker idea. These appointed meetings began, as all Quaker meetings began, without anything to appeal to eye or ear. The congregation was quietly told that this was an occasion for the discovery of the living God and for communion with Him, and that nothing would be spoken until the Teacher of His people and the Shepherd of souls should open something Himself in the mind of one of His messengers. Then a silence would fall over the company, often more impressive than the somewhat formal silences of the distinctly Quaker meetings, and the gathering would be prepared for the words, often tremendously powerful with their inspirational quality and their cadenced strain. The effect of these meetings was to pick out and win over persons in the neighbourhood who

[1] Thomas Clarkson's *A Portraiture of Quakerism* (New York, 1806), vol. i. pp. 339-341. Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846); English philanthropist, not a Friend.

were disposed toward mystical religion and who were ready for this type of Christianity which put the stress on direct relation with God and on individual responsibility.

A very interesting instance of the way in which this type of simple, faithful ministry accomplished its spiritual purpose and enlarged the boundary of the Society can be found in the quiet labours of Huldah Hoag, the wife of Joseph Hoag, and mother of the no less famous Lindley Murray Hoag. She was born in Vermont, and was recorded a Minister of the Gospel in 1791. She appointed the first meeting ever held on the west side of Lake Champlain. With an infant child in her arms, she started on her journey to hold this meeting which she had previously appointed. She and her two companions were met by a furious storm as they were attempting to cross the lake in a boat and were drenched with water. They landed on an island, and with the greatest difficulty they started a fire, by which they spent the night. The next morning they proceeded ten miles by water and five by land. They covered the five miles on foot, arriving just in time for the meeting to which the settlers of the surrounding country had come. Not long after this visit a meeting was set up there, and a little later a Monthly Meeting was established. Huldah Hoag frequently went a hundred miles on horseback, often carrying an infant child in her arms, to Quarterly Meeting and three hundred miles to attend Yearly Meeting. During the period of her ministry no less than fifty Friends were recorded as Ministers in her Quarterly Meeting (Ferrisburgh), four of whom were her own children.[1]

A number of the most important Ministers in the Society at the close of the eighteenth century were discovered and drawn into service by this public work of travelling Ministers. An exceptional few of the Ministers took a wider range and went forth to preach the gospel as a message of salvation to the unchurched, without

[1] See article in *Friends' Review*, vol. iv. p. 147. For fuller account of this interesting woman see *Journal of Joseph Hoag* (Auburn, N.Y., 1861).

much thought of bringing their converts into the Society. This attitude appears at its highest in Stephen Grellet, in Thomas Shillitoe, and in Daniel Wheeler, though something of its universal quality can be felt in the ministry of any of the travellers who had a special call to work in prisons and houses of correction in the countries where their service lay.

One natural result of this extensive itinerancy was the eventual prevalence of a single type of Quakerism throughout the far-sundered communities that composed the Society. It was as though a common pollen fertilized every spiritual flower in the entire garden. There was no written creed, there were no fixed forms or ceremonies, nobody could quite *describe* what constituted the essential marks and characteristics of the Quaker "faith," and yet wherever Friends maintained a group life—in Ireland, in Great Britain, in New England, in Pennsylvania, in the Southern States, in the "new" West, in the Islands of the Sea—there was among them a similarity in ideas, in phrases, in conscientious scruples, in emotional tones, in spiritual perspective and emphasis, in garb and manner, in facial expression and vocal modulation. The members were persons, often of insistent individuality, maintaining at all costs their right to think, and act, and worship for themselves, and yet some subtle influence, without their knowledge, had transformed them all into one profoundly marked *genre*.

That unifying influence is to be found in continuous inter-visitation of the spiritual leaders of the Society and in the moulding force of their Journals. We know to-day, though still inadequately, the immense part which unconscious imitation plays in the formation of the outer and inner life of children and how profoundly suggestions work when they come from persons who are invested with prestige. The itinerant Quaker Minister was a representative person, he was gifted, he came from far, he had endured and suffered for his faith, but, more than all, he was believed to be a divinely chosen and heaven-guided person who was almost as much visitant as visitor. The

hush and silence of the "opportunity" and of the public meeting produced beyond question a psychological condition of natural and easy suggestibility. The thoughts, the emotions, the phrases, the ideals, and the manners of the impressive guest would by a mysterious alchemy be fused into and become a living part of the group around him, while at the same time he himself would unconsciously be moulded by the impalpable touch of the most influential members of the group among whom he was visiting. And in the flow of time there came to be a Quaker type, in which, as in a composite photograph, the dominant features and the striking traits of spiritual leaders merged into a single universal *genus*, to be recognized wherever one saw a "Quaker." [1]

I shall close this chapter with a brief account of a striking itinerant visit to a newly discovered group of Friends in the south of France. The primary "concern" for this eventful visit arose in the mind of Sarah (Tuke) Grubb. She had for "a considerable time" been "impressed and exercised with an apprehension" that she was called to pay a religious visit to some parts of Germany and France. She "spread this concern before the Friends of her Monthly Meeting" and received "the near concurrence" of these Friends, also of the Quarterly Meeting and the London Morning Meeting. Joined with her in this extreme labour were her companion, Mary Dudley, her husband Robert Grubb, and two famous American Ministers, George and Sarah Dillwyn of Philadelphia. The party was later increased in France by the company of John Eliot of London and Adey Bellamy of High Wycombe. The little band set out in March 1788—surely a difficult time to visit France! They went by way of Holland and the Rhine, and on this journey through Germany they almost discovered another group of continental Friends. They did find along the Rhine many pious and awakened mystics who were often called "Quakers" by their neighbours. Our travellers, however,

[1] A previous chapter has dealt more specifically with the part which the itinerant Ministers took in spreading the quietistic ideal throughout the Society of Friends.

not knowing any language but English, were sadly hampered in their efforts to help these "Inspirants," as they called themselves, though they "centred down, into the quiet" and tried to send their spirits out, without uttered words, to those German mystics, and they secretly desired that their minds might be so influenced as to "convey to the people in silence that which is better than words,"[1] an interesting revelation of Quaker Quietism and a good instance of what Madame Guyon called "spiritual maternity."

The group which they "almost discovered" was a body of mystically inclined Pietists living in and around Pyrmont and Minden, who were already "Friends," though hardly conscious of it. Two years later, in 1790, Sarah Grubb, in company with others, did actually discover this Pyrmont group, "weary of the ceremonial part of religion," "desiring its living substance" and already "true worshippers in spirit." They were a "simple-hearted, seeking people," "a seed of God hidden from the world." This visit of 1790 led to the formation of an important Quaker group in Germany.[2]

The travellers on this journey of 1788 came up the Rhine, breathing loving thoughts toward the groups of mystics, and reached Switzerland in May. They passed through the wonderful Alpine scenery when the beauty and grandeur were at their height, but their hearts were not "captivated thereby," because they were travailing, as they went, in "suffering for the invisible seed of God," which they felt sure existed in these countries, though they could not take the time to seek it out and find it and help it to come to full life.

At Lyons they were joined by John Eliot, who knew some French, and by Adey Bellamy. They embarked on a boat and had a swift journey down the Rhone to Pont St. Esprit, from which place they quickly drove to Nîmes. Here they found the people "panting for gospel streams," but they hurried on to their real destination at Congénies,

[1] *Life of Sarah Grubb*, p. 160.

[2] The history of this German Quaker community is told in Schmidt's *Ursprung, Fortgang und Verfassung der Quäkergemeinden zu Pyrmont* (Braunschweig, 1805).

where the faces of the people shone with joy at their coming, and were "like the countenances of Mary and Elizabeth when they saluted one another!" Here, in Vaunage Valley and in the surrounding hill country, the visitors found a fully fledged, ready-made "Society of Friends," native to the soil, uninfluenced by English Quakerism, "a hidden precious seed of God."

The historical facts are briefly these. In the awful time of persecution which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes the Huguenots of the Cevennes, under the terrible strain and agony of their experiences, had extraordinary outbreaks of *prophetism*. Men, women, even little children, were seized as by a superior Spirit, were swept by a contagious enthusiasm and spoke with a power before unknown. Some of these "inspired" prophets appealed to arms, called their people to secure their liberty with the sword and to make short work with their oppressors. The leaders—half-prophet and half-soldier—carried the excited people on into a fierce, stern, and somewhat fanatical movement, known as the Camisard. A tiny section of the Camisard group, on the other hand, formed around inspired prophets and prophetesses who preached the spirit of love and forbearance as the only Christlike way of life. The exact course of the development of this peace-loving movement is somewhat in doubt, but it seems that one of the leading Camisard "prophets," named Daniel Raoul, having been apprehended with three of his disciples, was thrown into prison in Nîmes and condemned to death. This was in 1703. While waiting his execution, Raoul became deeply impressed with the feeling that their righteous movement should no longer be stained with blood and hate. Inspired and granted a higher vision, he dictated to a disciple his dying message, as a will and testament, to his people. He reviewed the wrongs and sufferings they had undergone, "the excessive tribulations" which naturally impel hot human spirits to demand revenge. But he calls his friends to a different course. You are to follow Christ, he tells them. You are to love your enemies. Love is patient and gentle;

it takes no offence; it suffers and endures everything. You have wandered, he reminds them, far from the example of Jesus Christ. Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. You cannot restore the pure worship of God by acts of butchery. We are not under the old law; we are under a new law of love and forgiveness.[1]

The definite formation of the Quaker group at Congénies out of the peaceful minded Camisards is ascribed to a "prophetess" named Lacrèce, who about the year 1716 called her followers to "separate" from the larger body and meet at her house. From that period there seems to have been a persistent spiritual group in Congénies, in Calvisson, in Fontanès, in St. Giles, and scattered individuals in other nearby villages. They had their martyrs. They produced local prophets and prophetesses. They met in secret places and worshipped God in silence or by "inspired" utterance. One of the most distinguished families of the group was the Bénézet family of Calvisson, two miles from Congénies. One of the men named Paul Codognon visited England in 1769, and once attended a Friends' Meeting in London, where he met John Eliot, a companion of Sarah Grubb in this first "visitation." These "inspired," silent, peace-devoted people were called by their neighbours, sometimes "Inspirés"—the inspired ones, and sometimes "Conflairés"—a patois word which apparently means "Pouters," given on account of the look of the faces of the silent worshippers.

This "hidden seed of God" was discovered by English Friends in 1785–1786 in a very curious way. Joseph Fox, a Friend in Cornwall, had been part owner of two ships, which, against his will, went out as cruisers during the American Revolutionary War and captured two French merchantmen. Fox took his share of the prize money, invested it, and, as soon as peace was made, took measures to restore it to the owners of the French merchantmen. In the course of advertising the matter in the French

[1] This document is given in Charles Tylor's *The Camisards* (London, 1893), pp. 110-112. It is not certain that this "testament" really comes from Raoul, but that is the tradition which has always prevailed at Congénies.

newspapers, or through public comments upon the strange deed, the little Society in France heard of it and were made aware that there were people like themselves in England.[1] One of them, Jean de Marsillac,[2] a man with an interesting history, went to London and had important meetings, and had interchange of views with English Friends. This was in 1785 and 1786. There were at this time four "prophets," besides Marsillac, in the various groups, and there were somewhat more than two hundred adherents.

Into this group of "Inspired" the little party of English and American Friends came, the 23rd of May 1788, and we can understand now why the countenances shone and were radiant! The visitors found the members of the French Society much like themselves, except in manner of garb and outward appearance. They seemed to be "on the right foundation," eager for "the progress of Truth," and ready to "embrace every offer of help." They had the simplest possible form of organization, no tenets, no officials, no records. They did however care for their own poor and oversee the moral life of their fellowship. The visitors gave them much instruction, brought them fresh inspiration and comfort, visited all their families, held many meetings, organized their business meetings, stirred all the communities where the "Inspirés" lived, reached all the outlying groups, and had "an affecting parting" from the sincere, simple, intensely devout people, "with many tears."[3]

This proved to be the beginning of a very interesting story. For a hundred years the French Society, thus discovered and established, progressed, created schools, received numerous visits of itinerant Friends, produced influential personalities, extended its spiritual interpre-

[1] Joseph Fox died before the affair was carried to completion, and his son, Dr. Edward L. Fox, conducted the advertising.

[2] For records of the life of de Marsillac see *Journal of Friends' Hist. Soc.* vols. xv., xvi.

[3] See *The Life of Sarah Grubb* and *The Life of Mary Dudley*, also Tylor's *The Camisards*, especially the Appendix. These French Friends received a remarkable visit and further reorganization in 1796. The party of Friends this time consisted of William Savery of Philadelphia, David Sands of New York, and two English Friends, William Farrer and Benjamin Johnson.

tation of religion, and finally came to an end because military conscription compelled most of the members to migrate to America.[1]

[1] London Y.M. *Book of Meetings* still carries Congénies in its list, and there are a few Friends living in the region.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY QUAKERISM

By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century —the period at which these studies begin—the Society of Friends was already becoming isolated from the wider world around it and was being formed into a little world, a microcosm, of its own ; and the process of isolation went on increasing through the whole century. Its guides and leaders followed, unconsciously no doubt, in the steps of the builders of Judaism after the exile, who endeavoured by every known device to make a nation impervious to Hellenic culture. The Quaker guides feared the contamination of the world ; and they feared no less what they would have called the marring influence of the religious thought and the religious practices in vogue in the churches of their day.

But however much they might strive to form a "peculiar people"—a remnant, or seed, of the true Israel —they could not in that age of the world weave a complete insulation around their Society. The "world" would mysteriously filter in, do what they might, and the spiritual lethargy of the times, as well as the noise of the great eighteenth-century battles of theology, broke through the Quaker defences and invaded the inner fold. It would therefore be impossible to study Quakerism in any adequate way without taking account of the social and religious currents of the period. One can discover that the Quaker dress adjusted very slowly to the fashions of the world and followed a generation or a half-generation behind

prevailing styles, and somewhat in the same way one can trace a slow and lagging modification of thought brought about by the influence of the intellectual problems of the age or by the filtering in of the spirit and atmosphere in which the larger world was living. Many characteristics and many difficulties which come to light in Quaker circles in the early nineteenth century were the belated fruit of tendencies which had already run their course and had spent themselves in the "outside" world.

The first and most obvious fact to be noted was the general religious deadness and lethargy, the worldliness and self-seeking which prevailed, both in England and America, in the period before the great Methodist revival. It was a time of intense theological debate, engaging some of the most gifted controversialists that have in any age helped to shape the doctrines of Christianity; but real religion was nevertheless in a low state, probably indeed at its nadir point since the Reformation. Nothing was quite so completely "tabu" as *enthusiasm*, or any appeal to feeling. Leslie Stephen thus characterizes the sermons of that day:

> No one, unless he were confined to a desert island with no other form of literature at hand, could really affect to read them with pleasure. Dull, duller, and dullest are a sufficient critical vocabulary to describe their merits.[1]

A competent historian of the century declares:

> Never has a century risen upon Christian England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne and reached its misty noon beneath the second George—a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn. There was no freshness in the past, and no promise in the future. The Puritans were buried and the Methodists were not born.[2]

Lord Chesterfield, in his speech against licensing the stage in 1737, portrays the licentiousness of public plays, but he fears that there is still more reason to "complain

[1] Stephen: *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (3rd ed., 1902), vol. ii. p. 337.

[2] Quoted from Sydney's *England in the Eighteenth Cent.* (N.Y., 1891), vol. ii. p. 328.

of a general decay of virtue and morality among the people." Sydney, in *England in the Eighteenth Century*, says :

> The leaders, both in Church and State, careless in their lives and ungodly in their conduct, neglected their duty and became corrupt and altogether abominable ; while the public and private life of the aristocracy, of the upper and middle classes, as of the lower orders, was marked by nothing so much as duplicity, conjugal infidelity, dissoluteness, and laxity.[1]

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes humorously in 1723 :

> I am told that there is at this moment a Bill cooking up . . . to have *not* taken out of the Commandments and inserted in the Creed at the ensuing session. . . . Honour, virtue and reputation, which we used to hear of in our nursery, are as much laid aside as crumpled ribbons.[2]

Bishop Secker, in his charge of 1738, complains that "Christianity is now railed at and ridiculed with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all." Overton, in his excellent *History of the English Church*,[3] says that never since the Lollards had there been a time when "the clergy were held in so much contempt, or when satire upon them was so welcome," and he gives as one reason for this attitude that there was a very "general slackness" in the real work of ministry on the part of the clergy themselves. They showed "no zeal, no enterprize." They neglected the labouring classes and they did little parochial visiting. Their main work was reading the services and preaching on Sundays.[4]

Overton's account of the social and moral condition of England gives a very dark picture, but no darker than that presented in any of the good histories of this period.

"Drunkenness," he says, "increased among all classes, from the gentry, who prided themselves upon being 'three-bottle men,'

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[1] *England in the Eighteenth Cent.* vol. ii. p. 322.

[2] *Letters from the Right Hon. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 1709–1762 (Everyman's Library), p. 221.

[3] Overton and Relton : *History of the English Church, 1714–1800* (London, 1906).

[4] *Op. cit.* pp. 63, 64.

to the very poor, who were tempted by the offer of the gin-sellers to make them drunk for a penny and to give them straw to lie upon. The amusements of the people were cruel and brutal. Cock-fighting, bull- and bear-baiting were at the height of their popularity. . . .

"The criminal law was responsible for a good deal of the general deadening of the conscience of the nation. Its punishments were barbarous, and it too often made but little discernment between small and great crimes. 'No fewer than a hundred and sixty crimes,' said Sir Samuel Romilly in his *Observations on a late Publication entitled 'Thoughts upon Executive Justice,'* 'have been declared by Act of Parliament to be felonies without benefit of clergy; or, in other words, to be worthy of instant death.' These crimes, moreover, were not even scientifically regarded. To pick a pocket of only twelve pence and a farthing—anything over a shilling—was punishable with death, whereas an attempt at parricide was only a misdemeanour."

The gallows was one of the commonest sights, and people flocked to see the executions.

There were few signs of any revolt on the part of the public against such spectacles. Strange as it may seem, there were worse things than public hangings. Women were burnt instead of being hanged. The cases were numerous and are on record, and they lasted certainly up till 1789. The law was altered in 1790. In addition to which there were the punishments of the pillories, which were erected in several of the important streets in the City of London, as well as in many outside its boundaries. Whipping, too, was common both in public and in private.[1]

While the social and moral life of the people was in this neglected condition, and while the zeal and earnestness of the shepherds of the flock were at such a low ebb, the entire religious world was interested, acutely or remotely, in a great controversy on which it seemed, at least to some, the very existence of Christianity was staked—"the Deist-controversy."

Deism was a stage in the long endeavour to rationalize every aspect of human life, including Christianity, and to show that "the religion of Nature" is sufficient for all man's spiritual needs. Being an attempt to demonstrate

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 64, 65.

"the completeness of reason" in every sphere of human activity, Deism found itself forced to go on step by step and eliminate miracles and the supernatural element generally from religion and so to present a greatly "reduced" Christianity. The impulse which formed the spring and motive of Deism came into play long before the appearance of the definite deistical writings. The "Latitude Men," of the seventeenth century, who powerfully interpreted Christianity with a strong colouring of Platonism, everywhere exalted reason.[1] "There is nothing," Whichcote wrote, "so intrinsically natural as religion is."[2] Archbishop Tillotson had emphatically declared in his sermons that nothing ought to be received as a revelation from God which plainly contradicts the principles of natural religion and without good *proof* that it is a revelation. "Natural religion," he says, "is the foundation of all revealed religion, and revelation is designed simply to establish its duties," *i.e.* the duties of natural religion.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648) is often called the "father of Deism." He endeavoured to work out in his *De Veritate* (1624) a comprehensive natural religion based on the fundamental nature of man. His basis and criterion of truth in religion and ethics is that which is held in common by all men, *i.e.* that which the wise men in all ages have believed to be true. This knowledge of "common consent" rests in the last resort, according to Lord Herbert, upon self-evident principles, common to all men in virtue of certain basic instincts of human nature. He found five great articles of faith divinely implanted in the human mind, as *common truths or notions*, as original and indefeasible as reason itself: one supreme God; God is to be worshipped; true worship consists essentially of virtue and piety; man must repent of sin, and cease from it; righteousness and unrighteousness are respectively rewarded and punished both here and hereafter. Every-

[1] For a study of "the Latitude Men" or English Platonists, see my *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*

[2] Whichcote's *Aphorisms*, p. 457.

thing else which Christianity insists upon is "an artificial addition" due to the deceits or the inventions of priests. Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), author of *A Discourse on Natural Religion*,[1] one of the most famous theologians of his century, though endeavouring to buttress and defend the Christian faith, unconsciously, by his method of argument, supplied much material to the critics and opponents of it. He concludes that the basis of natural religion is the necessary moral distinction of good and evil. This moral distinction, exhibited by conscience, reveals the eternal nature of things and expresses the absolute will of God. We know by the self-evidence of reason that good conduct must be rewarded and evil conduct punished, but as this condition does not always prevail here in this world, there must be a future life and a perfect Judge. Thus our native moral and religious insight furnishes us with a belief in God, in virtue as God's holy will, and in a future life of rewards and punishments. This natural religion would be sufficient for all our needs if man had not corrupted his natural state and blinded the eye of his own reason. Because of this degeneration, revealed religion was graciously given to make the truths of natural religion more clear, emphatic and unescapable.

But the great forerunner of Deism is to be found in British empirical philosophy. The materialistic philosophy of Hobbes, which challenged almost all existing traditions and opinions, gave impetus to the movement and had a strong influence in the direction of Deism. The philosophy of John Locke (1632–1704), however, in a still more direct way furnished the foundation for the Deists to build upon, and Locke actually, though unintentionally, laid down the lines on which these bolder and more aggressive men were to proceed. Locke had a virile hatred both of mysticism and of the mysterious. Philosophy at length under his hands became lucid and clear. For him what was not clear was for that reason

[1] The full title was *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*. It was his second series of Boyle Lectures, given in 1705.

not philosophy. He made short work of innate ideas, upon which the spiritual structure of the ages had been built—"there are none." The mind trails no clouds of glory, when it comes; it is like "white paper," "void of all characters, without any ideas." It is "furnished" solely by *experience, i.e.* by "Sensation" and "Reflection." Locke himself raised no searching, fundamental doubts about the verities of religion. He "believed" like other people in the external world; in duty and in revelation; in law and order and causality; in God and immortality, and in the articles of the Christian Creeds. But there were plenty of "seeds of unbelief" lying dormant in Locke's epoch-making "*Essay*," and they were certain to germinate with time. Even more direct was the influence of Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), written, it should be said, without the least idea that he was unsettling any of the pillars of the faith. If, as Locke insisted, Christianity was through and through "reasonable," then there were surely some simplifications to be made in the prevailing forms of Christianity, and the Deists hereupon proceeded to do the work of simplifying.[1]

"John" Toland (his birth-name was Junius Janus Toland, 1670–1722) marked off a definite stage in the controversy with his little book, now scarce and seldom read: *Christianity not Mysterious* (1696). The thesis of the book is given in the following straightforward fashion:

> We hold that Reason is the only Foundation of all Certitude; and that nothing reveal'd, whether as to its Manner or Existence, is more exempted from its Disquisitions, than the ordinary Phenomena of Nature. Wherefore, we likewise maintain, according to the Title of this Discourse, that there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to Reason, nor above it; and that no Christian Doctrine can be properly call'd a Mystery.[2]

[1] The following persons are the leading names among the English Deists: Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648); Charles Blount (1654–1693); Junius Janus Toland (1670–1722); Matthew Tindal (1657–1733); Thomas Woolston (1669–1733); the Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713); Anthony Collins (1676–1729); Thomas Chubb (1679–1747); Lord Bolingbroke (1678–1751). The close relation of Locke to the succeeding Deists is well presented in S. G. Hefelbower's *The Relation of John Locke to English Deism* (Chicago, 1918).

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 6.

Scripture is to be held divine, not on its assertion, not because the Church has declared it to be so, but only if Reason proves it to be divine from the *evidence* of what it contains, and from its undoubted effects on men's lives.[1] We cannot properly speak of a *revelation* unless matters of a thoroughly intelligible character are conveyed to us by the revelation.

Since by *Revelation* Men are not endu'd with any new Faculties, it follows that God should lose his end in speaking to them, if what he said did not agree with their common Notions. Could that Person justly value himself upon being wiser than his Neighbours, who having infallible Assurance that something call'd *Blictri* had a Being in Nature, in the meantime knew not what this *Blictri* was? And seeing the Case stand really thus, all Faith or Perswasion must necessarily consist of two Parts, *Knowledge* and *Assent*.[2]

Toland is solidly convinced, not only that there are no *mysteries* in Christianity, but that we men are "sufficiently capable" by our own reason to discover all we need for our guidance and salvation.

Thus the deistic movement was started. It reached its high-water mark in Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730). Tindal's God is the well-known God of the eighteenth-century thinkers and "minute philosophers." He is a great First Cause, the cold and abstract reality of perfect Reason, the unchanging Author of Nature. He has supplied men, everywhere and in all ages, with a conscience adequate for all the problems of life and happiness. All that is essential in religion is inherently bound up with "that nature and reason which God has written in the hearts of every one of us from the first creation." His sweeping thesis appears in the following words:

Nothing can be requisite to discover true Christianity, and to preserve it in its native purity free from all superstition, but, after a strict scrutiny, to admit nothing to belong to it *except what our reason tells us is worthy of having God as its author*. And if it be evident that we cannot discern whether any instituted religion

[1] *Christianity not Mysterious*, pp. 31, 32. [2] *Ibid.* p. 133.

contains everything worthy, and nothing unworthy, of a Divine original, except we can antecedently by our reason discern what is or is not worthy of having God as its author; it necessarily follows that natural and revealed religion can't differ, because what reason shows to be worthy of having God for its author must belong to natural religion, and whatever reason tells us is unworthy of having God for its author can never belong to the true revealed religion![1]

Against what Sir Leslie Stephen calls "the shabby and shrivelled little octavos" that contained the teaching of the Deists, the contemporary theologians wrote "handsome quartos" and "ponderous folios" defending the faith. The main difficulty of the situation was that the theologians found themselves compelled to admit "the reasonableness of Christianity" in order to prove their claim that the articles of faith were valid doctrines. Thus the controversy raged between *pros* and *cons*, both of whom were fighting under the same flag, *i.e.* the competence of reason to deal with all matters of religion. The defences were as rationalistic as were the assaults. In many instances the "defenders of the faith" did more to banish the element of mystery from religion, and to pull down all the pillars of supernaturalism than did even the Deists and sceptics themselves. The God of the theologians as well as the God of the Deists was an abstract, external Being at the end of a syllogism, about whom, in endless logomachy, propositions could be bandied back and forth, without really killing anybody. The Deist, Anthony Collins, said humorously that nobody doubted the existence of God until the Boyle Lecturers undertook to prove it![2]

[1] *Op. cit.* (quarto ed.) pp. 197, 198.

[2] William Blake in his longer poems made war on all this endless rationalizing as a bondage to man's spirit. In *Jerusalem*, with its elaborate symbolism, he attacks abstract philosophy as the great enemy of imagination and so of life.

> "The spectre like a hoarfrost and mildew rose over Albion,
> Saying, 'I am God, O Sons of men. I am your Rational Power.'"

Again he says:

> "Bacon and Newton, sheathed in dismal steel their terrors hang
> Like iron scourges over Albion, Reasonings, like vast Serpents,
> Infold around my limbs, bruising my minute articulations.
> I turn my eyes to the Schools and Universities of Europe,
> And there behold the loom of Locke, whose woof rages dire."

As the controversy proceeded, the attack upon the positive strongholds of Christianity became more and more definite and far-reaching. The contention in the early stages was that Christianity is from beginning to end rationally grounded in the eternal nature of things, that Revelation and Nature are two parallel accounts of the will of the infinitely perfect Deity, and that these two diverse accounts of the nature of God support and buttress each other point by point. The later Deists contend that "natural religion" is the only religion that can be verified as true, and that at the same time it is all that man needs. "Natural religion," as Lord Herbert had said, consists of just those universal principles that are common to men "always and everywhere." They denied any special redemptive interposition of God in history. They were hostile to all theological mysteries, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Resurrection of Christ, special Revelation and the Atonement. They endeavoured to find naturalistic explanations for all Biblical "miracles." If there is a God at all He does not interfere anywhere in nature or history; He never breaks into the fixed order of things. They boldly raised the question whether there are any concrete prophecies in the Old Testament which are definitely fulfilled in the New. They gravely suggested the possibility that the cardinal miracles of the New Testament, as for instance the Virgin-birth and the Resurrection, owe their origin to enthusiasm, or to myth or to fabrication. In his tracts against miracles Thomas Woolston says that the so-called miracles of Jesus were not real miracles at all, they were rather parabolical narratives, and furnish no "sign" or evidence of His divine mission. He boldly declares: "I will show that the miracles of healing all manner of bodily diseases which Jesus was justly famed for are none of the proper miracles of the Messiah, neither are they so much as a good proof of His divine authority to found a religion." He adds: "The literal history of many of the miracles of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists, does imply absurdities, improbabilities and incredibilities."

Thus the Deists and their disciples and successors succeeded in throwing all the central articles of Christian faith into shadow and doubt. Voltaire, who spent three important years in England, from 1726 to 1729, imbibed these views with enthusiasm, and, with great brilliancy of style and with rare humour, he drove them into the consciousness of the world. It is an interesting circumstance that while Voltaire's mental habits and native disposition inclined him to take a sympathetic attitude toward the teaching of the English Deists he was also quite fascinated with the Quakers. In fact, in his *Letters Concerning the English Nation* he gives no account of the Deist movement while he gives four entire Letters to the interpretation of Quakerism.[1] The account of the Quakers is full of inaccuracies. His historical sketch is highly imaginative. But he shows throughout the Letters keen interest in and sympathy with the ideals and principles of Friends. He has much admiration for their simple, unaffected manners, their unstudied dignity, their attempt to follow the teachings of the Master and their endeavours to practise peace. He quotes with appreciation the words of a Friend whom he visited:

> We never war or fight in any case; but 'tis not that we are afraid, for so far from shuddering at the thoughts of death, we on the contrary bless the moment which unites us with the Being of Beings; but the reason for our not using the outward sword is that we are neither wolves, tigers nor mastiffs, but men and Christians. Our God, who has commanded us to love our enemies and to suffer without repining, would certainly not permit us to cross the seas merely because murderers cloathed in scarlet and wearing caps two feet high enlist citizens by a noise made with two little sticks on an ass's skin extended. And when, after a victory is gained, the whole city of London is illuminated; when the sky is in a blaze with fireworks, and a noise is heard in the air of thanksgiving, of bells, of organs and of cannon, we groan in silence and are deeply affected with sadness of spirit and brokenness of heart for the sad havoc which is the occasion of those public rejoicings.[2]

[1] *Lettres sur les Anglais*, vol. xxxv. of *Les Œuvres de Voltaire*. They were translated into an English edition in 1733.

[2] English Translation of the Letters, p. 10.

Owing largely to the power of his genius and his fame, Voltaire has come in the minds of many to stand out as "the great destroyer," but in real fact he only took up and carried on a movement already under way. His fight was not against religion; it was against a system which took the place of religion. It is true, as John Morley says, that "he had no ear for the finer vibrations of the spiritual voice,"[1] he was deficient in genuine religious sensibilities. But his great revolt was not against religion in its purity, religion in its first intention. It was against the appalling perversions of it as he saw it in Jesuits and Jansenists, in the hypocrisies and crass superstitions of the age of Louis XV. He was a powerful opponent of the bigoted, intolerant and obscurantist form of Christianity with which he was familiar, and which he falsely supposed was the Christianity of Christ and the Gospels. He did much, however, without question to undermine the faith of that age.

Great books were written to answer the sceptical assaults. The greatest of these early defences were Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736), sometimes called "the sword that slew Deism"; Bishop Berkeley's *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1732), and William Law's *The Case of Reason or Natural Religion* (1731). But the negative movement, with a continually shifting point of attack, swept steadily on, undermining the solid masonry of the ages. The most brilliant historian of the century, Edward Gibbon, gave powerful impulse to the sceptical tendencies, and the greatest British philosopher of any period, David Hume (1711–1776), mercilessly carried the prevailing English philosophy to its logical terminus, and pulverized the foundations on which both philosophers and theologians were building their imposing structures. Hume, like the lesser writers and "minute philosophers" of the period, wrote against miracles. His *Essay on Miracles* (1748) was the heaviest attack which the eighteenth century gave to "miracles" as evidences of the divine

[1] Morley's *Voltaire* (ed. 1909), p. 242.

origin of Christianity. But far more damaging to the spiritual structure of the ages was his central philosophical conclusion, that only *mathematical truths, and matters of fact*, presented directly in sensation, or revived by memory as "copies" of sensations are valid for knowledge. Even the universally accepted categories of *causality*, *universality* and *necessity* snap like Samson's green withes before his logic.

"When we run through libraries," Hume wrote, "persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hands any volume of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matters of fact and existence? No.* Then commit it to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."[1]

The range and scope of the attack on Christianity during the second half of the century so immensely widened out, and so far shifted the points of emphasis that the word "Deism" no longer applies to the later controversy. But in a general way even the later sceptical writers were seriously endeavouring to simplify and purify religion rather than to destroy it. Their problem was a very real one. The Christianity which their age insisted upon as the only way of salvation contained much which these rationally enlightened men were convinced was error and superstition. The difficulty was that their method of eliminating the false tended to tear down and destroy the whole system of Christianity. They were awake to the now obvious fact that there were narratives and passages in the Scriptures which conflicted with one another on matters of fact, which seemed inconsistent with reason and with enlightened ethical principles, and which they could not reasonably believe were ever communicated to the race as eternal truth by a perfect Deity. The difficulty was that they knew of no way to sift out the primitive and imperfect without attacking and overthrowing the entire revelation. The result was that

[1] Hume's *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Sec. XII. Part iii.

with their inadequate psychology and their undeveloped historical knowledge and critical insight, they did a largely negative and destructive work without for the most part intending to do so.

Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, three of the greatest makers of the American Republic, were mild Deists, and a fourth American patriot, Thomas Paine—known as "Tom" after he became a menace to religion—gave the movement its most popular interpretation in his *Age of Reason*, and he became in the eyes of many the *enfant terrible* of scepticism.[1] *The Age of Reason* seems a thin and ghostly "survival" now, but with all its coarseness and crudity, it expressed a hundred years ago, with "keen mother-wit," the passionate revolt of the awakening modern spirit against dull and stupid theological conceptions which claimed to be the only true and sacred ones; against a theory of inspiration which made the infinitely perfect God responsible for all the dark and cruel deeds of the Old Testament and against a way of salvation which often missed, and sometimes even conflicted with the elemental ethical standards in vogue for human action.[2]

Unfortunately no *answers* to the positions of the Deists and later sceptics relieved the strain, or made truth triumphant. Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* (1794) satisfied and strengthened those who were already convinced, but it is a book which proves nothing now and it was always inadequate for the task in hand. One feels, after reading the array of defences, deeply in sympathy with Coleridge's famous words: "Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it, rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge of his need, and you may safely trust it to its own evidences." The real trouble was that the philosophical formulations which all thinking people accepted in the eighteenth century inevitably led to an *impasse* when they were

[1] Another patriot, Ethan Allen, wrote *Reason the only Oracle of Man* (1784).

[2] Thomas Paine's father, Joseph, was born a Friend, and continued to be one until his death. Thomas used to say that he himself was "much influenced by Quaker principles." See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

carried through with fearless logic, and in a like manner did the theological formulations. When the *impasse* was reached, some took refuge in faith and some chose to wander on the barren fields of doubt, but nobody seemed able to start afresh, to reconstruct from the bottom up, to find a way of approach which clearly guaranteed for all serious persons the eternal issues of the soul.

There was no criterion of knowledge available which could guarantee the great verities. It was taken for granted that the mind which was a sort of passive receptacle—a "cabinet" or a "bird-cage," or an "empty tablet," as the figure might be—could be furnished only by sense-experience. How it could be proved that the world "outside" was exactly like the ideas of it found "inside" the mind, nobody could say, for "mind" and "world" were sundered, with a great gulf between. Another chasm, hardly less than infinite, yawned between God and man. Everything "natural" in this lower sphere could be explained by "laws," but there were "gaps," or regions which could not be brought under natural laws. The place to look for "evidences" for the existence of God was in the "gaps," the uncharted regions. There must have been a "First Cause," since no "natural laws" can explain a beginning. Even Thomas Paine admitted this, though Hume, with his irresistible logic, showed how weak this cable of rationalism was. The whole structure was a house of blocks that was in danger of collapsing any time, because nothing rested on immovable and unshakable pillars of certitude. Deism, even in the writings of its most extreme advocates and defenders, was not quite atheism. Voltaire, for example, was strenuously opposed to atheism. It was rather a movement which tended to put God utterly and completely beyond the world-order. It was the positive opposite to pantheism, which is always in danger of merging God with "nature" and so of losing Him as a real person altogether. The Deists put all their emphasis on the transcendence of God and by implication denied His immanence. At their hands God was rarefied and attenuated to an *être suprême*,

a First Cause, who is brought in to explain the origin of things and to furnish a rational beginning for motion and process. Once begun they assumed that the processes could go on without any further guidance or interference. But if everything in the universe could "run" on its own account after it was started, it was only an easy step to the next assumption that the original starter could be eliminated and discarded as an hypothesis. This course the atheists of the succeeding period took. In fact there never was any way to preserve and maintain a great faith in God on the presuppositions of eighteenth century philosophy. The Deists were dangerous just because the citadel of the faith and its defences in the eighteenth century were so easily open to attack. These "minute philosophers" were assaulting a man-made Christianity, an artificial structure, and not the real pillars of the Christian faith. The Deist's "God" was, like the Christianity which he was attacking, also an eighteenth century type of God and, therefore, more or less mechanical and artificial. The God of Deism is a God at the end of a syllogism, or, as the case may be, a God at the terminus of an infinite causal regress. He is behind the chain of finite causes—the "starter" of the process. He or It cannot be revealed as a person, because He is forever beyond the world of finite things. We know only that He must be wise because the world which He has made is full of contrivance and ingenuity, and we know that He is good because He rewards good conduct with happiness and He punishes evil conduct with unhappiness. He is, however, so thoroughly a God of the machine, a *Demiurge*, that He could satisfy only men who were unaware of the infinite depth and mystery and tragic complexity of the real world and of life as it is. On the old lines of defence Christianity could not successfully meet any one of the Deist's assaults, and in the battle with it the Christianity of the period became a transformed and truncated religion; but, fortunately, great, deep, constructive forces were already at work even in the eighteenth century which, culminating in the nineteenth, put Christianity

on a basis that arguments such as these leave quite untouched.[1]

While the bloodless intellectual controversies of the eighteenth century were running their course, vital, experimental Christianity was making some very positive advances. It found its most impressive mystical interpretation for the century in the writings of William Law, and it made its greatest popular conquest since the Reformation in the Methodist Revival.

William Law was born at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire in 1686. He took his B.A. degree from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1708, was elected Fellow of Emmanuel and received orders in 1711, and took his M.A. degree in 1712. He was from his early University days a student of philosophy and an ardent reader of the great religious mystics. He was, all his life long, a person of very sensitive moral conscience, and so unalterably fixed in his loyalty to principle that one might as well try to persuade a "cathedral to walk into the sea as try to persuade Law to change his convictions or to sacrifice them to his interests."[2] He early began to reveal the fact that he was the master, in a rare degree, of a lucid and convincing style of writing, and that he possessed a mind that invariably seized the key to any situation with which he was to deal. It soon became evident, too, that his pure and undivided soul dwelt in the calm and peace of real inward religion. Though in a logical controversy he could always beat his opponent, he nevertheless saw that Deists and sceptics could not be "confuted by external evidences," but only "by proofs lying at hand in each man's consciousness"; "by a goodness that springs from a *Life* within us."

"I had frequently," he says, "a consciousness rising up within me that the debate [on Deism] was equally vain on both sides, doing no more real good to one than to the other; not being able to imagine that a set of scholastic, logical opinions about history, facts, doctrines and institutions of the Church, or a set

[1] See later chapter on "The Religious Movements of the Nineteenth Century."
[2] J. H. Overton's *William Law* (London, 1881), p. 19.

of logical objections against them, were of any significancy towards making the soul of man either an eternal angel of heaven, or an eternal devil of hell." [1]

There are two well-marked periods in his life—one before he became acquainted with the writings of Jacob Boehme, and one after this Silesian prophet had *opened his eyes*—but in both periods he was a mystic, an experimental witness to the inward Light and a saint. The greatest literary work of his first period was his *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, first published in 1729.[2] "Next to the Bible, it contributed *more than any other book* to the rise and spread of the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century," is the testimony of one whose judgment is sound and balanced.[3] Dr. Johnson, whose religious life was profoundly influenced by it, enthusiastically pronounced the *Serious Call* "the first piece of hortatory theology in any language." The book is exactly what its title calls it—a serious call to a devout and holy life. It closes all accounts for ever with compromises. In an easy, lethargic world, adjusted to a jog-trot religion, it proposes to return to the old-fashioned, blood-red, costly Christianity of apostles and saints, and, by levelling up, to make common, everyday life synonymous with Christianity. "It is as possible," this earnest message declares, "for a man to worship a crocodile and yet be a pious man, as to have his affections set upon this world and yet be a *good* Christian." [4]

The first word of real religion, for Law, is a sincere *intention*, a resolute purpose to live as though religion "made a difference" and affected life and action. He insists, with an emphasis which even the Quakers of the time did not surpass, that Christians must make simplicity and plainness of dress and the proper use of money

[1] "The Way to Divine Knowledge," Law's *Works* (Edition of 1762. Reprinted 1893), vol. vii. p. 153.

[2] The Quaker, Benjamin Holme, had published in 1725 an important little book which he called *A Serious Call in Christian Love to all People to turn to the Spirit of Christ in themselves*. One would like to know whether William Law had seen this book and whether it suggested his title to him.

[3] J. H. Overton in *William Law*, p. 109.

[4] "A Serious Call," *Works*, vol. iv. p. 14.

*matters of conscience*—"a saint genteelly [*i.e.* elegantly] dressed is as great nonsense as an apostle in an embroidered suit!"[1] It is an essential mark of Christianity, not that it conforms to the fashions of the world, but that it *overcomes the world*—"Religion commands us to live *wholly* unto God." "Indulgence in dress is as great an *abuse* as indulgence in eating and drinking."[2]

The note of self-denial sounds like a trumpet-call throughout the book. Like all *great* devotional books it goes the whole way of the cross. You cheat yourself if you think you can make yourself happy "by climbing up a ladder" to some "imaginary heights" on which ambition focusses.[3] There is no way of blessedness except by the death of the old self and by the birth of a new spirit, a new temper, that chooses, loves and walks Christ's way regardless of the cost:

> . . . there is nothing wise, or great or noble in a human spirit, but rightly to know, and heartily worship and adore the great God; that is the support and life of all spirits, whether in heaven or on earth."[4]

This remarkable book represents the culmination in England of the type of Christianity embodied in the sermons of Tauler, *The Theologia Germanica* and *The Imitation of Christ.* It has become in Law far less metaphysical and baffling, more closely adjusted to life as a rational affair, and it is rendered more impressive and practical by means of a great series of portraits drawn with life-like touches and with wonderful strokes of humour. But, nevertheless, it still remains a religion over-stern and hard, with too little light thrown on the great dynamic of Christianity and with too feeble emphasis on the *joy* of life.

In the second period, which dates from about 1733, Law was by no means as influential with his writings as in the former period, but he was far deeper in life and insight and nearer to the inward sources of spiritual power. In his new writings, everywhere deeply pene-

[1] "A Serious Call," *Works*, vol. iv. p. 71.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. iv. pp. 102 and 76.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 106.
[4] *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 272.

trated and infused with the message of Boehme, whom, according to the custom of the seventeenth century, he called "Behmen," the mystical aspect of religion is strikingly predominant. Man has eternity in himself. The *key* to all worlds is within him. Forms and Creeds and Observances are only "Cloaks to be put on"; they do not bring the new life, the new temper, the new spirit.

"For a man to think himself a moral Philosopher," he says, "because he had made a choice Collection of Syllogisms, in order to quicken and revive a Divine Goodness in the Soul, or that no Redeemer need come from Heaven, because Human Reason, when truly left to itself, has great Skill in chopping of Logic, may justly be deemed such an Ignorance of the Nature of Things, as is seldom found in the Transactions of illiterate and vulgar Life."[1]

"Poor Sinner!" he cries, "Consider the Treasure thou hast within Thee; the Saviour of the World, the eternal Word of God lies hid in Thee, as a Spark of the Divine Nature, which is to overcome Sin and Death, and Hell within Thee, and generate the Life of Heaven again in thy Soul. Turn to thy Heart, and thy Heart will find its Saviour, its God within itself. Thou seest, hearest, and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him *abroad* with thy outward Eyes, thou seekest for Him in Books, in Controversies, in the Church, and outward Exercises, but *there* thou wilt not find Him, till thou hast *first* found Him in thy Heart. Seek for Him in thy Heart, and thou wilt never seek in vain, for there He dwells, there is the Seat of His Light and Holy Spirit.

"For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within Thee is thy *only true* turning unto God, there is no other Way of finding Him but in that Place where He dwelleth in Thee."

"Thou needest not therefore run here, or there, saying, *Where is Christ? Thou needest not say, Who shall ascend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Christ from above? Or who shall descend into the Deep, to bring up Christ from the Dead?* For behold the *Word*, which is the Wisdom of God, is in thy Heart, it is there as a Bruiser of thy Serpent, as a Light unto Thy Feet and Lanthorn unto thy Paths. It is there as a *Holy Oil*, to soften and overcome the wrathful fiery Properties of thy Nature, and change them into the humble Meekness of Light and Love. It is there as a *speaking Word* of God in thy Soul; and as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal speaking Word will speak

[1] "The Spirit of Love," *Works*, vol. viii. p. 22.

Wisdom and Love in thy inward Parts, and bring forth the Birth of Christ, with all His Holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers within Thee."[1]

Salvation is for him no longer a doctrine, a plan, or a theory to be argued about; it is a birth, a life, an experience, a process, an operation, a power. The "Seed" is always there in the soul, for to be a person is to have the Seed of God within, but there is no salvation until that "Seed" is found and awakened and quickened and raised into dominion over the whole life, so that the "Seed bruises the Serpent" and becomes the inmost victorious Nature of the new man. "I have found," he says,

that God is always in me, that Christ is always within me; that he is the inward *Light* and *Life* of my Soul, a *Bread* from Heaven, of which I may always eat; a *Water* of eternal *Life* springing up in my Soul, of which I may always drink. O my Friend, these Truths have opened a new Life in my Soul: I am brought home to myself; the Veil is taken off from my Heart; I have found my God; I know that his Dwelling-place, his Kingdom, is within me. What need we then call out for Books written only with Pen and Ink, when such a Book as this, so full of Wonders, is once opened in our own Hearts? My Eyes, my Ears, my Thoughts are all turned inwards, because all that God, and Christ, and Grace, are doing for me, all that the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, are working against me, are only to be known and found there. What need then of so much News from abroad, since all that concerns either *Life* or *Death*, are all transacting, and all at work, within me?

Let Religion have ever so many Shapes, Forms, or Reformations, it is no true Divine Service, no proper Worship of God, has no Good in it, can do no Good to Man, can remove no Evil out of him, raise no Divine Life in him, but so far as it serves, worships, conforms, and gives itself up to this Operation of the holy, triune God, as living and dwelling in the Soul. Keep close to this Idea of Religion, as an inward, spiritual Life in the Soul.[2]

Everything that *matters* in the experience of the soul is due to what he here calls "an operation of God" within. Prayer becomes, as it was with the quietists, a hushing

[1] "The Spirit of Prayer," *Works*, vol. vii. pp. 28 and 33.
[2] *Works*, vol. vii. pp. 51 and 111.

of one's own powers and voices, so that the moving of the Spirit has free course. There is, he says, but one true way of prayer, and that is through union of life with God, so that the Spirit of God *moves* the prayer in the soul, and then it does not need to be in words, for the silent *tendency* of the heart is prayer.[1] For the mature Christian who has become Christ-minded and harmonized in will, in desire, and in love with the Heart of God, prayer becomes a continuous operation and is no longer merely an affair of words. The soul now does not so much pray to God as *live in* God.

> Its Prayer is not any particular Action, is not the Work of any particular Faculty, not confined to Times, or Words, or Place, but is the Work of his whole Being, which continually stands in Fulness of Faith, in Purity of Love, in absolute Resignation, to do, and be, what and how his Beloved pleases. This is the last State of the Spirit of Prayer, and is its highest Union with God in this Life.[2]

Faith and Love and Virtue and holy action are only various expressions of the operation of God. "The unwearied Patience, the unutterable Meekness, the impartial, universal Love of God, manifested in my Soul are the only proofs that God is in me of a Truth."[3]

Atonement involves only a change and process on the human side. Man, and not God, needs to be reconciled. The "wrath" that separates is in man's spirit, not in God's heart.

> Search all the Bible, from one End to the other, and you will find that the Atonement of that which is called the Divine Wrath or Justice, and the extinguishing of Sin in the Creature, are only different expressions for one and the same individual Thing. And therefore, unless you will place Sin in God, that Wrath, that is to be atoned or pacified, cannot be placed in Him.[4]

There is no Heaven for any man unless the heaven-nature is forming in his soul, and there is no escape from hell until the nature of hell is banished from the inner

[1] See "Spirit of Prayer," *Works*, vol. vii. pp. 133-137.
[2] "Spirit of Prayer," *Works*, vol. vii. p. 128.
[3] *Works*, vol. vii. p. 141.
[4] "The Spirit of Love," *Works*, vol. viii. p. 70.

spirit. The real key which closes hell and opens heaven is a birth-change in the soul—the arising of the Day-star in the heart. Redemption is a *life-process*, and not an affair of logic :

> You are to seek your Salvation, not in taking up your travelling Staff, or crossing the Seas to find out a new Luther or a new Calvin, to clothe yourself with their Opinions. No. The Oracle is at Home, that always, and only speaks the Truth to you, because nothing is your Truth, but that Good and that Evil which is yours within you. For Salvation or Damnation is no outward Thing, that is brought into you from without, but it is only That which springs up within you, as the Birth and State of your own Life. What you are in yourself, what is doing in yourself, is all that can be either your Salvation or Damnation.[1]

William Law had no admiration for, and little real appreciation of the Quakers who were his contemporaries. Their opposition to the sacraments and to the ordained priesthood put them out of the sphere of his sympathy ; but the fact stands clear that he and they drew from the same sources, were influenced by the same forerunners, were of one mind in reference to the nature of salvation, the direct work and operation of God on the soul, the futility of "opinions and notions," the importance of simplicity and downright sincerity of life, the wickedness of all war, and the absolute worth of the spirit of love. He said, better than they could express it, what they believed about God and man ; and they, better than he succeeded in doing, translated the spirit of love into far-reaching human service. He was, I think, without question the foremost English exponent in the eighteenth century of the essential meaning of Christianity, but his greatest practical service to religion was the prominent part he had in the spiritual preparation of John Wesley, one of the most remarkable of the great reforming prophets of modern Europe. Leslie Stephen thinks that Wesleyanism is "by far the most important phenomenon of the [eighteenth] century,"[2] and most historians agree with

[1] *Works*, vol. viii. p. 53.
[2] *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 389.

that judgment. This is, of course, not the place for an exhaustive treatment of the great Methodist movement, but it appealed to some of the most enduring wants of human nature, it so profoundly affected the spiritual current of life in England and America, and it had such an important after-influence on the Quakerism of our period, that it cannot be passed over in silence here.

John Wesley (1703–1791), like St. Augustine, is a shining instance of a mighty faith begotten through a mother's faith. Susanna Wesley

> Laid her mind
> On him, and he believed in her belief.

The first great formative influence, after that of the home atmosphere at Epworth, was Jeremy Taylor's broad and spiritual interpretation of Christianity in *Holy Living and Dying*, which Wesley read in his early student days at Oxford. This was followed by Thomas à Kempis' intense and glowing call to follow Christ in the way of self-crucifixion and death. Both books, in conjunction with his mother's letters, worked deeply upon his sensitive spirit and wrought a marked change in his way of life. "I began," he says, "to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set out in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement; I communicated every week; I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed."[1] The next constructive influence was Law's *Serious Call*, which *found* so many noble spirits in that lukewarm period and "waked them as a man is awakened out of his sleep." The personal friendship between Law and young Wesley began in 1732 and went on deepening and ripening for eight or nine years, and even after their ways divided Wesley never ceased to respect the man who ministered so effectively to his early condition, nor did he ever cease to value Law's great book of devotion.

In this first formative stage of his religious life the mystics, whom he read at Law's suggestion, played a very

[1] John Wesley's *Journal* (Standard Edition, 1910), vol. i. p. 13.

important part in shaping his development, though he afterwards turned emphatically away from Mysticism, looked upon it as a "shipwrecking rock," and showed himself to be of a strongly unmystical temperament. In the mystics, however, at an earlier period he found a religious intensity, a conviction resting on experience, and an overcoming faith which spoke with power to his own condition. The Moravians, whom he first met during his eventful sojourn in Georgia (1735–1737), exhibited in their lives these same characteristics—intensity, conviction, first-hand experience and inward power, without having the features of Mysticism which repelled him. It was a man of the Moravian fold, Peter Böhler, who helped him most directly toward the final stage of his journey in search of a satisfying faith. What he finally arrived at in his epoch-making discovery was a way of salvation almost identical with that which formed the central faith of the Luther of 1521, though fused and coloured by the intellectual and emotional climate of a later age and a different land. According to his insight, the faith that justified is a faith of absolute assurance, an assurance founded not on logic or on exegesis, but on *direct inner insight of experience through an immediate gift of God*.[1] He himself has described the moment when this grace came to him and when the assurance, which made him henceforth such a dynamic influence, was won for good and all.

> In the evening [24th May 1738] I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.[2]

Neither the experience of Wesley nor the doctrines which he preached were new. Even his emphasis on the

[1] Böhler held that conversion and renewal of spiritual life can take place only through a supernatural and instantaneous divine operation.

[2] *Journal* for 24th May 1738, vol. i. pp. 475, 476.

importance of a second experience—the conviction of sanctification from sin—was not new. It was already in a milder way a feature of Luther's teaching, and George Fox and Robert Barclay had powerfully called seventeenth century Christians to a sanctified state of life, in which the believer felt himself delivered from sin and the power of it. What *was* new, when Wesley awakened England, was the perfect simplicity of his formulation of the message, the white-heat of his conviction, the method of his appeal, his way of approach to the sinner, the extraordinary personal quality of the man himself, and the genius with which he seized the points of emphasis and the type of organization best adapted to his age and to the type of people among whom his mission lay. Both he and his great co-labourer, Whitefield, possessed a power of appeal to the common, toiling, labouring man and woman such as few preachers in any age have possessed. When Whitefield came to America in 1739, "religion," in the words of one of his staunch supporters, "lay a-dying and ready to expire its last breath of life." The powerful effect of his message was immediately apparent. Benjamin Franklin, who was not likely to be carried away with religious enthusiasm, says:

> It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manner of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion it seem'd as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk thro' the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.[1]

To show the power of Whitefield's eloquence, Franklin relates how on one occasion he had decided not to make any contribution to the collection which was to be taken at the end of the sermon, but the power of Whitefield's speaking loosened all the strings of his purse.

> "I had," he writes, "in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that and determined me to give the silver, and he finished so admirably

[1] Franklin's *Autobiography* (John Biglow's Ed., 1872), p. 253.

that I empty'd my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold pistoles and all."[1]

John Wesley's labours and the influence of his voice and life were truly extraordinary. He preached during the years of his ministry over forty thousand times, an average of fifteen sermons a week. He rode over well-nigh every road in England. He probably knew more of his fellow-men by name than did any other man in Europe, and when he died "he was doubtless," as one of his recent biographers has well said, "the best beloved man in England."[2] Lecky is not overstating the case when he says, "He [Wesley] has had a wider constructive influence in the sphere of practical religion than any other man who has appeared since the sixteenth century."[3] Wesley was quite naturally firmly opposed to the main tenets of Quakerism, though he generally recognized and appreciated the spirit and the goodness of the lives of many Quakers whom he met. Against Barclay's *Apology* he was always vigorously militant. In London in 1745 he found "numbers who were hugely in love with that solemn trifle, Robert Barclay's *Apology*." He "opened their eyes; they saw Barclay's nakedness and were ashamed."[4] In 1738 he wrote "A Letter to a Person lately joined to the People called Quakers," twenty pages 12mo in length, in which he makes up his accounts with Barclay and gives ten points in which Quakerism differs from Christianity. In fact he once declared that he "should as soon commence Deist as Quaker," and in a letter to a young lady he declares that "a silent meeting was never heard of in the church of Christ for sixteen hundred years."[5] But in spite of this judgment on theological grounds, he nevertheless spoke many times with deep respect of individual Quakers. After reading William Edmundson's *Journal* he wrote in his own *Journal* under date of 17th July 1765:

[1] Franklin's *Autobiography* (John Biglow's Ed., 1872), p. 255.
[2] C. T. Winchester, *The Life of John Wesley* (London, 1906), p. 123.
[3] Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 687.
[4] L. Tyerman's *Life and Times of John Wesley* (N.Y., 1872), vol. i. p. 489.
[5] Tyerman, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 31.

If the original equals the picture (which I see no reason to doubt) what an amiable man was this! His opinions I leave; but what a spirit was here! What faith, love, gentleness, long-suffering! Could mistake send such a man to hell? Not so. I am so far from believing this that I scruple not to say, Let my soul be with the soul of William Edmundson.[1]

He also spoke with much respect of Dr. John Rutty as "a man full of faith and love."[2] Of the profound influence, both positive and negative, of the Methodist movement on Quakerism I shall speak in the next chapter, and again in a later chapter when I come to deal with the Quaker revival which burst forth in the closing half of the nineteenth century.

Hardly less important than the Methodist revival, at least for its influence on Quakerism, was the evangelical movement within the English Church. The founders of Methodism were loyal churchmen and they had no intention of going out of the Church to form a new denomination, but the Church of that time was not broad enough to include them and their converts with the new methods and practices which they introduced. Another group of evangelical clergymen, awakened and vivified by the work of Wesley and Whitefield, expounded the same theology and preached practically the same gospel in their Anglican churches, and though subjected to much criticism and opposition in the early period of the movement, succeeded in producing a far-reaching revival in the Church. The most conspicuous figure of this evangelical group was John Newton (1725–1807). He passed through a wild and wicked period in his youth, spent at sea and on the Gold Coast as overseer of a slavery depot, where he sank almost to the level of an animal. After vicissitudes and experiences hard to match outside of fiction, he became converted and conducted prayers in the slave ship on which he was sailing, and within sound of the agonizing cries of the heart-broken slaves, packed like sardines in the hold of the

[1] Quoted in Barclay's *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, p. 598.

[2] Quoted from R. H. Fox's *Dr. John Fothergill* (London, 1919), p. 130, n.

ship, he "enjoyed hours of divine communion," sweeter and more frequent than he had ever known before. While in America on one of his voyages to the West Indies he became acquainted with George Whitefield, whose preaching helped him to reach a higher stage of Christian experience. He diligently studied Greek and Hebrew on his return to England while living in Liverpool, read the best writers in divinity, and in his thirty-ninth year became curate at Olney in Buckinghamshire. His preaching at Olney was intensely evangelical and he devotedly laboured to convert sinners and to reform the habits of the inhabitants of the region. The most memorable feature of his life at Olney was his profound influence over William Cowper (1731–1800), who became, under Newton's spiritual tutelage, the poet of "Evangelicalism" and the great hymn-writer of the movement. In 1779 Newton became rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, in London, where he exercised a powerful and far-reaching evangelical influence until his death in 1807.

Thomas Scott (1747–1821) had been converted to the evangelical faith by Newton before the latter went up to London, and he became one of the foremost interpreters of this type of Christianity. He was the incumbent of a church near Olney, and had adopted what he afterwards called "the poison of Socinian views." Newton's preaching arrested him and set him upon a diligent study of the Bible, from which study he emerged a convinced "Evangelical." The literary result of his great transformation was one of the most important books which the movement produced—a book to which John Henry Newman declared he almost owed his soul—*The Force of Truth* (1779). Scott also exercised an immense evangelical influence through his Commentaries on the Bible, issued in weekly instalments, and written in "prostrate reverence of soul" before the infallible Word of God, of which he was a humble interpreter.

Joseph Milner (1744–1797) also owed his conversion to the evangelical faith primarily to Newton. He was a Cambridge scholar, an Anglican minister and Grammar

School master in Hull. He turned with intense zeal to the interpretation of what, in his awakened faith, seemed to him the only true form of Christianity. His supreme service to the evangelical cause was his production of a *History of the Church of Christ* (1794–1797), written to prove that the true Church of Christ in all ages has been evangelical, and that the great spiritual leaders and reformers have been evangelical men. The deadly errors and lapses which have sapped the power of the Church have been, in Milner's opinion, lapses away from evangelicalism.

Henry Venn (1725–1797), grandfather of Joseph John Gurney's friend Henry Venn, was another of the great eighteenth century interpreters of evangelical religion. He became "convinced" of this faith about the middle of the century and preached it in fervid sermons at Clapham and at Huddersfield. On account of impaired health he retired in 1771 to a small living at Yelling, within easy reach of Cambridge, where he exerted a strong evangelical influence over Cambridge men, the most notable of whom was Charles Simeon, an evangelical leader of the next generation and a friend of Joseph John Gurney. Venn's most important contribution to evangelical literature was his once popular and famous *Complete Duty of Man.*

William Wilberforce (1759–1833) is one of the greatest names in the succession of evangelical leaders. He was turned from a frivolous life, while on a tour in Switzerland, by the influence of Isaac Milner, brother of the ecclesiastical historian Joseph Milner, and he accepted with enthusiasm the evangelical faith. A great parliamentary career opened before him, and he became one of the leading personages in the upper ranks of English society of his time, so that he was able to spread evangelical Christianity in circles which an ordained preacher of it might not have influenced. He turned with the fervour of an apostle to the cause of the slave, became the acknowledged leader of the movement against the slave trade, and did very much to associate evangelicalism inseparably with humanitarian reforms. The

movement no longer spent itself in producing burning sermons on man's spiritual condition and in preparing homilies and commentaries; it was now carried with eloquence and well-directed insight into the practical work of the liberation and elevation of suffering humanity. Henry Thornton, Granville Sharpe, Lord Teignmouth, Thomas Clarkson and Zachary Macaulay are some of the noble men who in the same intense religious faith worked with Wilberforce for the abolition of the slave trade and for the liberation of the slaves. Out of this same evangelical movement within the Church came into being The Church Missionary Society (1779), The Religious Tract Society (1779) and The British and Foreign Bible Society (1804), the combined effect of which upon the religious life of the world can never be estimated. It was a movement which plainly had its limitations and which in time came strongly into collision with the intellectual culture of the nineteenth century, but even so it must always rank as one of the great religious forces of an age which could hardly have been spiritualized without it, and it produced some of the most consecrated lives that have ever been lived.

This brief review of eighteenth century movements has dealt only with a few currents of influence, but the features upon which I have touched are the ones which most intimately concern the student of Quaker development. As one studies the low and barren religious life of England before Wesley awakened it with his powerful appeal, one feels a sense of depression that the followers of George Fox, who began so well, showed in the eighteenth century so little of the "threshing power"; but as one follows through the immense and far-reaching effects of the Methodist movement one feels that it was probably best that another type of reformer should in turn come to do the work that did not lie in the range or scope of the Quaker genius. The real pity is, not that John Wesley had to come to do what he did, but that it took so long for Friends to be shaken awake so that they could see their peculiar task and mission in the world around them.

## CHAPTER IX

### DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERGENT QUAKER VIEWS

IN that great battle period of religious faith, now generally called the period of "enlightenment," which I have briefly reviewed in the preceding chapter, the Society of Friends was being gradually, though in the early stages quite unconsciously, transformed.

Friends from their beginning had a fear of theology. They were as much opposed to what they called "notions and opinions," *i.e.* theological doctrines, as they were to ritual and sacraments. They "testified against" creeds as vigorously as against "priests." They cherished the ideal of a religion based wholly on experience, and progressing age after age in the power and demonstration of inward "bubblings from the inexhaustible Springhead."[1] But men and women have, for better or worse, eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, and they find themselves compelled by an irresistible urge to ask questions about "experience"—how it is to be verified and tested, and many other elemental "hows" and "whys," and, before one is aware of it, "notions and opinions" are being formed and cherished. Each generation is bound to ask what "the fathers" *meant* by their sacred sayings and their solemn practices, and the new interpretations are apt in turn to grow more or less sacred. In the high-tide period of awakening, first-hand experience was sufficient and adequate, but when the movement slowed down to its duller and more monotonous stage there were sure to

[1] David Hall's *Epistle of Love and Caution* (Dublin, 1749), pp. 10, 11.

be many who needed "a body of truths" to supplement their own thin experience. At first it was enough to know that *there is one even Jesus Christ who speaks to the soul's condition*, but it soon became necessary to elaborate and explain this inner Light, to show its relation to the Christ of history, and to explain how the soul's immediate revelation squares with the great fact of revelation in Scripture.

Then, "the foxes" were all the time threatening to "spoil the tender vines," that is to say, the ideas and attitudes prevailing in the world outside were always penetrating through the Quaker hedges and affecting the susceptible youth of the Society.[1] It became necessary to persuade and convince the growing, inquiring minds of each new generation, and that task called for interpretations of Quakerism. A certain *feeling* and attitude could be passed on from father to son. Habits and practices could be formed and made subconscious in the children, but something more was necessary. Some appeal must be made to reason, something that was of the nature of "truth" must be communicated, and *that* once more opened the door for "notions and opinions," which began to come in full flood.

I find three fairly well defined tendencies of thought shaping themselves in the Society in the half-century between 1775 and 1825. There appears under way (1) a clearly marked tendency to mould and formulate Quaker thought in the direction of evangelical doctrine. There is at the same time in evidence (2) a strong set of current in the direction of an excessive reaffirmation and reinterpretation of the principle of inward Light as the sole and sufficient basis of religion, and thus in a somewhat anti-evangelical direction. Finally, (3) there is a tendency, though much more limited, to conform to the world and to accept the conclusions which rationalists and deists, in the name of "enlightenment," were pressing upon the attention of thoughtful men and women everywhere.

[1] "Take the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines," Song of Solomon, ii. 15. This was a favourite text with Friends.

These tendencies were for a long time only implicit, like the mathematics of the spider and the honey-bee. The several leaders were not consciously aware that they were diverging from "the old paths." They had no forecast of the course their line of march would eventually take, and they hardly suspected, until impressive events forced the fact home to consciousness, that deviating currents were in progress. The "foxes" that were nibbling the vines were very little foxes, but one day the havoc would appear only too evident!

The first of these tendencies, the incipient evangelical awakening, was due primarily to the influence of the Methodist movement and to the corresponding evangelical revival in the Church of England and in many of the Nonconformist groups. The evangelical movement meant, first of all, an awakened, intensified, religious faith, marching forth in the power of experience to the conquest of sin in the name of a Saviour who really saves. It almost at once, however, meant something else much more definite and doctrinal. "Evangelical" at the close of the eighteenth century meant a distinct type of religious thought in aggressive and militant conflict with rationalism, irreligion, scepticism, and deism. It embodied at this stage a definite theory of man, of Christ, of Scripture, and of salvation. Man is a fallen and ruined being, devoid of spiritual capacity, totally depraved in his own nature, and sundered by an infinite chasm of separation from God. Two bridges only span or have spanned that chasm, both of them in every sense supernatural bridges. One is Scripture and the other is Christ. Scripture is the word of God miraculously transmitted across the chasm of separation, and supplying to man all truth about spiritual matters that he needs or ever will need, and furthermore all that can ever be procured. And every word of this revelation is a divinely given and an infallible revelation. Christ, the other supernatural gift, is an absolutely different order of Being from the order of mere man. He is a wholly miraculous Person who has come to the world to inaugurate a dispensation of Grace

and to make human redemption possible. Something superadded to human nature can now be acquired by an act of faith. Something has been interpolated into human history which now makes redemption available. The transaction on the Cross stands solitary and alone in the events of temporal history as the finished act which makes a way of salvation possible for the race sundered from God by the fall.[1]

The formative "leaders" who gave expression to this tendency among Friends, and who pointed the line of march in this general direction, were for the most part born in other folds and nurtured outside the Quaker atmosphere. They "came in" from the outside and brought with them a psychological attitude somewhat different from that of the inbred Quaker, and quite unconsciously they added a tinge and colour of their own. This new emphasis appears impressively in the religious interpretations of Ministers like Mary Dudley and Thomas Shillitoe of England; Rebecca Jones, David Sands and Stephen Grellet in America, and in others of like intensity of spirit.

Mary Dudley was in her youth an intimate friend of John Wesley, who did everything in his power to keep her from joining Friends. She was intensely religious, possessed a remarkable gift in ministry, and was fused through her entire being with a burning passion for the conversion of souls. "I sometimes feel," she used to say, "that I could fly even to distant lands to proclaim the gospel of life and salvation." Throughout her whole period of public ministry she frequently held meetings among Methodists and other evangelicals and had great influence and fellowship with them. She thoroughly appreciated the mystical way of approach in worship and she had an inspirational type of ministry of the genuine Quaker sort, but at the same time she dwelt much on "the original fall and degeneracy of man," and upon the inherited disposition to evil fastened in perpetuity on Adam's descendants; and quite naturally she emphasized "the stupendous plan of

[1] This type of Christianity is studied in the Introduction.

redemption," which "divine, unerring wisdom and love" has provided to meet that situation.

Wherever we get a glimpse of her message, it throbs with an evangelical passion and reveals a conception of human need and of divine Grace quite similar to that which appears in the contemporary revival preaching. "I trust enough may have been said, however feebly," she told her friends, "to manifest my faith and the ground of my hopes, which solely rest upon the mercy and goodness of God in Jesus Christ";[1] and her farewell commission to her friends was:

> Preach Christ crucified. . . . There is much of the Greek and Jewish spirit amongst us, but be not afraid to preach the cross of Christ, and to proclaim not only what He would do within us by His Spirit, but also what He hath done without us, the all-atoning sacrifice which should never be lost sight of.[2]

There can be no question of the tone and emphasis of this gifted, impassioned woman, nor of her great influence both upon other Ministers and upon the rank and file of the Society. She brought with her into the Society of her adoption a fervour and a dynamic quality in every way like that which marked the founders of Methodism, and which characterized the leaders of the revival in the English Church. She struck a new note in Quaker preaching, but she was so deeply imbued with all that was best in the Quaker spirit that her hearers hardly suspected what a change of emphasis marked her glowing messages. She was a gentle revolutionist, transforming people who had no idea they were being transformed.

Rebecca Jones of Philadelphia, who came from the Church of England to Friends, reveals in her life and ministry very similar traits to those which we have just been reviewing. She had in her youth an extremely acute consciousness of sin, and she experienced a profound conversion of the usual evangelical type. When she became a Friend she fully accepted the Quaker interpretation of worship and ministry, and she went the whole way of conformity in dress and manner, but she

[1] *Life*, p. 285. [2] *Ibid.* p. 286.

brought with her and always maintained in her spirit a more pronounced evangelical emphasis than that which prevailed among the birthright Friends of her time. What was uppermost in her conception of salvation comes full into light in a passage in her last will and testament, which is as follows:

> Acknowledging with gratitude and in humility of soul the tender and infinite mercy of the Lord Almighty, which has in numberless instances been signally vouchsafed and displayed for my redemption from sin and the wages due thereto, and his preservations and deliverances by sea and by land; hoping, through the merits of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ, to be admitted into his holy kingdom when I shall put off this earthly tabernacle; and in peace and unity with his Church under every name.[1]

Her intimate fellowship with the leading Ministers of her period in Philadelphia, especially with Thomas Scattergood, Samuel Emlen, George Dillwyn, John Pemberton and William Savery, is well known, and the influential effect of her positive emphasis upon the evangelical aspects of salvation can hardly be doubted. Rebecca Jones exerted on American Quakerism an influence and power very similar to those which Mary Dudley exerted in England. She was well educated, possessed of decided gifts and, like Mary Dudley, kindled with positive evangelical fervour. She was not as vague and indefinite as many Ministers of the period were. Her message focussed upon certain central truths which she made clear and vivid, and these truths were the familiar truths of the gospel. The fact that she was dearly loved and admired gave an added power to her preaching and prevented her listeners from consciously noticing that her point of emphasis was different from that of others. William Savery, among the Ministers associated with Rebecca Jones, was the most strongly marked with evangelical sympathies. He was a pure, noble spirit, possessed of more than ordinary culture, successful in his outward affairs, kindly and benignant in

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 258.

disposition, and a very gifted speaker. An interesting study of him, printed in *The Friend* (Philadelphia), confirms the impression given by his *Journal*, namely, that he was a positive exponent of the evangelical message. An extract from this article makes the point very clear:

One of the striking characteristics of William Savery's ministry was its full and forceful acknowledgment of the divinity and various offices of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had no sympathy with infidelity in any shape. Whilst at Paris, Second month 23, 1797, he makes this note in his diary: "I do not doubt that with all the vices and infidelity which reign in Paris, there are many of Sion's true mourners there; with such I was favoured frequently to feel a secret sympathy. May the great and universal Shepherd of the heavenly fold stretch forth his arm to this nation, and gather many thousands to the standard of truth and righteousness, where their tossed souls may lie down in safety, and none be able to make them afraid. In the evening David Sands and myself fell in with Thomas Paine, and spent about an hour and a half in conversation about his opinions and writings. He made many assertions against Moses, the prophets, Jesus Christ, etc., which had much more the appearance of passionate railing than argument, to all which we replied. I felt zealously opposed to him, and believe that nothing was said by my companion or myself that gave him the least occasion to exult. We bore our testimony against him firmly."

In Ireland there was at that time much secret infidelity amongst some members of the Society of Friends, and it is therefore not a matter of wonder that William Savery should often feel his mind drawn to set forth the danger of deistical opinions whilst in that land. When Nicholas Waln attended in 1795 the province meeting held at Mount Mellick, through the immediate openings of the Holy Spirit, his mind was impressed with the conviction, that there was a spirit at work in that place, which would divide and scatter Friends. He believed it would draw many of those who even filled high stations into self-sufficiency and a disbelief of the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As he honestly unfolded his view, it was a matter of surprise to many of his hearers, and some wished to have him publicly censured. Now in the First month, 1798, when William Savery attended a meeting at the same place, his mind was also opened to discover the workings of the same unbelieving spirit, and he faithfully laboured against it. At many meetings on his travels, wherein he was constrained to bear testimony to

the Truth as it is in Jesus, fully and emphatically, he afterwards found that avowed deists were present.[1]

Thomas Shillitoe was one of the most pronounced quietists in the Society of Friends, and he was as sensitive to inward impressions as an aspen leaf to the breeze, but he joined to this strong mystical disposition an equally pronounced strand of evangelical faith. His most common phrases are, "the adorable mercy," "the unmerited mercy of God." He reached hardened and abandoned people with something of the same power which marked the ministry of Wesley and Whitefield, and he was almost more sensitive about the strict observance of the Sabbath than were the Methodists themselves. He possessed a missionary zeal for the salvation of lost souls which was unusual among the Ministers of his generation. The Scriptures held a place of great importance in his thought, and he insists that no people have been more tenacious than the Society of Friends in upholding a firm belief in the miraculous conception and the divinity of Christ.[2] It was he, more emphatically than any other Minister of that day, who opposed Elias Hicks and pointed out in sermon after sermon what he believed to be "the unsoundness" of the latter. He declared, toward the end of his career, in the following words, what had been the foundation sentiment of his entire religious life:

> I feel I have nothing to depend upon, but the mercies of God in Christ Jesus. I do not rely for salvation upon any merits of my own; all my own works are as filthy rags:—my faith is in the merits of Jesus Christ and in the offering he made for us. I trust my past sins are all forgiven me,—that they have been washed away by the blood of Christ, who died for my sins.[3]

David Sands was born on Long Island, New York, in 1745. He was a Presbyterian during the early period of his life, and became a Friend by convincement in the

[1] *The Friend*, vol. xxii. p. 244. There is a slender volume of William Savery's *Sermons* (Burlington, N.J., 1805). They show a well-balanced, well-rounded message. He dwells much, after the manner of most Friends, on inner experience and immediate revelation, and he tends to spiritualize the gospel, but he, at the same time, fully appreciates the historical element and is, in the best sense of the words, orthodox and evangelical.

[2] See *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 328.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 424-425.

twenty-first year of his age. He was recorded a Minister of the Gospel in 1775, and it was through his remarkable labours that Quakerism was planted and widely spread in the newly settled regions of what is now the State of Maine.[1] His mind was long exercised with thoughts of crossing the seas to pay a visit to Friends and others in Europe, and having received the proper "credentials" of his meetings, and having made "a tender parting" from his friends and family, he sailed for England in 1794. His travels and ministry and family visiting in Europe, especially in Great Britain and Ireland, continued for eleven years. He was a man of unusual native powers. He was emphatically of the *prophetic* type, swept by sudden incursions, possessed of inspirational openings, and enabled in some mysterious way to reveal the states and conditions of mind of persons in his audience unknown to him. He believed himself to be in every sense a consistent, genuine, old-line Quaker. He brought with him into the Society of his choice, however, an evangelical tone and emphasis which marked him off from the birthright Friend of the time, and he, more than any other prominent Minister of the eighteenth century, cultivated in the minds of Friends both in England and America the evangelical temper and the habit of orthodoxy. During the years of his European visit he had much service in Ireland at the time when there was widespread intellectual unsettlement prevailing in many of the Irish meetings, and he became the vigorous and uncompromising embodiment of the "sound" viewpoint of the orthodox wing. His biographer says that he believed himself

> . . . called upon to unite with the sound Friends in earnestly contending for the faith of the Gospel against those who denied the Godhead of Christ and the efficiency of His propitiatory sacrifice. His labours and services were a great support to many of his friends in this critical juncture, though it drew upon him some unfriendly and improper animadversions.[2]

He felt that he was sent to cry against Deism and the

[1] See, for details, my *Quakers in the American Colonies*.
[2] *Journal of David Sands* (London, 1848), pp. 187-188.

dangerous tendencies of the age, and with this mission strongly on his soul he inclined toward a strict orthodoxy. He was one of the most strenuous opponents of Hannah Barnard, who was, as we shall see, the leading champion in the first years of the nineteenth century of a freer type of thought in the Society. The groups of Irish Friends who were moving in the direction of "liberal thought," and who were reading the literature of the period, took a strong dislike to his preaching and reacted in the opposite direction to the trend of his thought. This was equally true of Friends in England who were open to currents of thought in the wider world. David Sands therefore became a divisive influence without intending to be so. The importance of "soundness" gave a tinge of colour to all his messages, and made him either welcome or unwelcome according to the predilection of his hearers. The few fragments that remain of his sermons exhibit the fervent evangelical temper of his Methodist contemporaries, though he joined with this spirit many of the distinctly Quaker ideas. This address which follows, and which he gave in a dance-hall, to the amazement of all the gay dancers, will show how thoroughly his thought ran parallel with the preaching of the great revivalists of his century:

My friends, for what purpose is this gay company assembled? Is it to worship Almighty God; him from whom all your favours and blessings flow; who, in his love and compassion, gave the dear son of his bosom as a ransom, that through him you might have eternal life? Or have you rather suffered yourselves to be led captive by the enemy of your soul's peace, who, for a season, may hold out bright and pleasing allurements to tempt your unwary feet to stray from the true fold of peace, revealed in and through Christ Jesus, your Saviour and Redeemer; he who suffered his precious blood to flow to wash away your sins. Oh! be persuaded by a brother, who loves you with the love which flows from the fountain of all good, to turn from these follies and devices of Satan which will lead you astray. Oh! be persuaded, I say, to seek the Lord whilst he may be found; turn to him and he will turn unto you; knock, before the door of mercy is eternally closed, and he will receive you and encompass you with unbounded love, and lead you gently into

pleasant places, even into the kingdom of heaven, where you will rejoice for evermore, singing praises unto the lamb! Yea, he will be unto you as a shield and buckler; and as your strong defence in times of trouble. Suffer him not to stand knocking at the door of your hearts until "his head shall become wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.[1]

When we come to Stephen Grellet and his immediate circle of intimate friends we find ourselves in an atmosphere charged with evangelical fervour. "My mind dwelt much," he says of his early days in the ministry, "on the nature of the hope of redemption through Jesus Christ. I felt the efficacy of that grace by which we were saved, through faith in Christ and His atoning blood, shed for us on Calvary's Mount."[2] That note, sounded at prime, was sounded unfailingly down to the evening of the great French preacher's life.

As early as the year 1800 his keen evangelical spirit detected what he calls a tendency to "infidelity" prevalent among Friends, and he notes with horror how some "deny the Lord who bought us with his own blood" and call in question "the validity of the Holy Scriptures."[3] He was one of the first to feel the difference between the teaching of Elias Hicks and what he called "sound doctrine," and even as early as 1808 he both "earnestly laboured" with Hicks and "felt himself constrained publicly to disavow the unchristian doctrine that he advanced."[4] There is no doubt whatever that Grellet appreciated at its full value the inner way of worship and the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, but in his theology, in his message about the way of salvation, he belongs with Bunyan rather than with Fox, and he shows the evangelical temper of Wesley and John Newton rather than the mystical outlook which characterized the religious body into which he came. He was the most gifted Minister in the Society in America when he was at the height of his powers. He had an unmistakable unction

[1] *Journal of David Sands* (London, 1848), pp. 218-219.
[2] *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 47.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 71.
[4] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 142.

from above, and he often seemed carried beyond himself with an inspiration which none who heard him at such times could doubt. He felt intensely the burden of the world's suffering, and he yearned with apostolic zeal over those who were astray in the deeps of sin. He was a tender prophet, appealing in love rather than moving by emotions of fear and terror. But always throughout his entire ministry he was preaching a gospel in close accord with that which had broken in upon the lethargy of the eighteenth century in the messages of Whitefield and Wesley.

This tendency toward the evangelical attitude comes into clear light in some attempts which were made at the turning of the century to formulate the Quaker position. The first of these attempts at this time—which was beyond question a critical time—was that made by Henry Tuke in his little book, *The Faith of the People called Quakers in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London, 1801), and his *Principles of Religion, as professed by the Society of Christians, usually called Quakers* (London, 1805).

The former of these two books consists of carefully chosen extracts from the writings of early Friends. The second is an original work of considerable importance. Much of it is an admirable account of the characteristic beliefs and ideals of Friends, but it is obviously written in a time of storm and controversy, and it aims to defend the faith at points where attack has been made, and it therefore leans strongly in the direction of orthodoxy. Tuke honestly believed that his position was point for point the position of the first group of Friends. He can show, he thinks, voluminous passages from their writings to prove that he now holds "the faith once delivered." The fact is, however, that the point of emphasis has entirely altered in Tuke's books, and the whole perspective has changed from that of the seventeenth century. Tuke believes, no doubt, in the inner work of the Spirit, but he is really writing his book to stem a tide of thought which seems to him unorthodox, and he consequently

raises evangelical doctrines into unprecedented prominence. He is endeavouring to eliminate unsoundness, and this motive colours all his work.

He defends "the credibility of Moses," and insists that "we have no less support for the authority of Moses than our Lord Himself," since "He and His apostles always mention him [Moses] with evident tokens of their considering him divinely directed."[1] He replies at length to the objection, which was one of the main contentions of the freer thinkers, that the passages which represent God as commanding the destruction of the enemies of Israel cannot be divinely inspired, and he reaches the usual comfortable conclusion of orthodoxy, though it does not sit very well with his pronounced peace views. It is, he holds, a fundamental truth that the Holy Scriptures were communicated to us under divine influence and inspiration. The theory that the Scriptures were "communicated" is a novel doctrine for a Quaker to hold, and indicates an advanced orthodoxy, though he may not have meant to use the word literally and strictly. "The next most important doctrine" is "man's loss through disobedience of the state of innocence and purity in which he was originally created," which subjected the offspring of the first parent to sin and misery. This is all stated much as the evangelicals of the time would have put it, and he follows this up with a strongly orthodox account of the plan of salvation "through the propitiatory sacrifice of our blessed Redeemer," "by which He purchased for mankind the advantages resulting from His death."[2] He insists upon "the divinity, or godhead, of Jesus Christ" as strongly as Wesley would have done, and he declares that our very "capacity to receive salvation" comes from the justification wrought by the sacrifice of Christ.[3] In a brief summary passage Tuke gathers up the central ideas of Christianity, and one can hardly fail to feel the difference, as he reads it, between him and a Friend of the seventeenth century. He says:

[1] *Principles of Religion*, p. 30.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 37, 43.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 46, 49.

The Christian religion then teaches, as has been observed, that our first parents having sinned, and lost the divine image, the fallen nature became so predominant that it was by them transferred to their offspring; but in order that man might be restored to favour, and to a state of purity, it pleased the Almighty to promise and send a Redeemer, whose sacrifice of himself he saw meet to accept, as the means of reconciliation and forgiveness of sins; hereby putting an end to all those sacrifices, which, from the fall, or very soon after, to the time when Christ thus offered up himself, had been adopted as a means of obtaining acceptance with God.[1]

As Tuke's books soon became standard interpretations of Quakerism, though they were criticized and opposed by some Friends, this type of thought was carried broadcast into the minds of English and American Quakers during the first decade of the century. *The Principles of Religion* went through twelve English editions by the middle of the century, and it was printed, reprinted and reissued again and again in the different Yearly Meetings in America. There was hardly a single Quaker home which did not own a copy, and it became one of the greatest evangelical influences.

The second tendency that was strongly in evidence throughout the period during which the evangelical tide was rising was a return to the inward principle as the sufficient basis of religion, and this tendency generally, though not always consciously, took on an anti-evangelical emphasis. In the earlier stages of the divergence the leaders of the two tendencies were not clearly aware that they were diverging. The difference was at first not a sharp contrast, but rather only a matter of more or less emphasis. The discovery in the closing years of the century of a distinct third tendency, believed to be gravely dangerous, brought the divergent views consciously to light, more sharply differentiated them and led to far-reaching consequences.

The theological position now under consideration was

[1] *Principles of Religion*, p. 44. The development of this evangelical position in the Society will come more fully to light when we turn to consider the third tendency with which this chapter is concerned.

that held for the most part by the solid, conservative "pillar" Friends of the time. They did not think the position through, but they silently carried on in their day and generation the fundamental inner principle of Quakerism, and they assumed that this was the eternal and unvarying truth of Christianity. So long as the position remained subconscious and implicit, as it usually was in the lives of the silent membership—a principle to live by rather than something to be talked about and explained—it passed unchallenged. When, however, it was explicitly set forth and pushed to an extreme formulation, it shook the more evangelical members wide awake to its bearing and significance, and when further it was welcomed as a fundamental basis of Quaker faith by the freer thinkers who were supposed to be dangerously inclined, it aroused fresh questions, and sent many Friends on a new quest for the true basis of authority.

It was Job Scott of Rhode Island who explicitly developed the position and pushed it to extreme formulation, and he powerfully interpreted the view not only in extensive writings, but also in impressive sermons throughout the meetings of America and Great Britain. He was a typical Quaker saint of the period, and he died for the cause while abroad on his travels, leaving a luminous trail of spiritual light behind him. In the words of a contemporary account, "he was a man of strong natural abilities, of singular piety, and of exemplary dedication of heart to whatever appeared to him in the light of duty. He considered religious truth as a pearl of inestimable value." There were many other Quaker preachers who held similar views to his, but Job Scott is unquestionably the foremost eighteenth century exponent of the position now under consideration. He was himself conscious that he was very bold in his views, and that he was taking new ground, as the following personal testimony given near the end of his life indicates:

> I know I have treated some mysteries a little more openly, and handled them a little differently, from what I have seen in any writings; but I am deeply grounded in them, as being the

very life and substance of Christianity, indeed of all true religion. No doubt "professors" will object, as they always have done, to every unfolding of truth: but what avails their cavils, or, indeed, what avails their quiet with us if it is in a way that allows them to live at ease in sin, under a mistaken notion that they are going to heaven by Christ?[1]

Shortly before his death, which occurred at Ballitore, Ireland, in 1793, he wrote:

I have often felt as if I should die in debt to the world if I did not make some considerable additions (in my comments) upon some subjects that may have been thought a little peculiar to myself, but which I believe are strictly in the very life and essence of the Gospel. . . . Our views of things do not usually open all at once. It is so in the individual, it is so in the world. Things have hitherto been gradually evolving, and it may be consistent with infinite wisdom that such a progression should always continue. At the present day things are considerably ripening.[2]

Scott was, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, a thorough-going mystic, and his religion always rested primarily on his own first-hand experience. Here is his own account of a typical experience of the kind by which he lived:

This night, as I lay awake in bed, I was almost overcome with the fresh extendings of the love and goodness of God to my soul, and seemed swallowed up in the inshinings of his luminous and glorious presence. In this almost ecstatic enjoyment my soul bowed in awfulness and reverence before him, and the whole man was renewedly offered up to his service, to be disposed of as he pleased. And after thus continuing for some time, subjectly given up to his holy will, witnessing his glory to rest upon me as a royal diadem, and receiving some sweet manifestations or confirmations of his fatherly care having been day and night extended to and over me, from my youth, for my preservation and advancement in the way of life and salvation, it pleased his infinite majesty to condescend once more (as at some few gracious, solemn and peculiar seasons, in the course of my pilgrimage before), as it were, to set open the windows of heaven, and spread before the view of my mind the excellency and glory thereof.[3]

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[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 474—slightly condensed.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 461.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 276.

He endeavoured to turn all his hearers and readers to the reality and glory of an inward experience of God. Nothing for him had efficacy in the sphere of religion unless it was *sealed* in personal experience: "If thou dost not *feel* it, it is nothing."[1] Grace is not grace for us until it "becomes quick, lively and operative, and quickens the soul to a *sensibility*."[2]

He carries on in his day precisely the same view of salvation as that expounded by Jacob Boehme and William Law. Nothing counts or avails, *i.e.* has saving value for him, as for them, without a real birth of Christ in the soul, producing a new nature kindred with His divine, spiritual being. A few of his startling phrases will illustrate this position: "All of His true disciples are born of God; even of the same incorruptible seed, of which Christ was, and is begotten." "If the birth in us was not the same as in Him, we could not be one with Him." "Every soul in whom Christ is formed, or begotten and brought forth, is truly His mother."[3] "In all ages it has been a real birth of God in the soul, a substantial union of the human and divine nature; the son of God, and the son of man, which is the true Immanuel state." "The true doctrine of salvation has ever been, in all ages, Christ in man the hope of glory; a real union of the life of God and the life of man." "Nothing but a true and living birth of God in the soul, of the divine and incorruptible seed, a real and substantial union of the divinity and humanity in one holy offspring, has ever brought salvation."[4]

To be saved is to be inwardly washed and cleansed and brought into vital relation with the divine resources of life. Until "the old man with his deeds" is dead, until the love of sin is conquered by a higher love, salvation has not come to pass, "however one may boast of imputed righteousness and cry peace, peace." Christ Himself, *i.e.* the divine nature, must be born and formed in the soul. There must be a death to sin and a rising in newness of life, and the Christian who is to walk with the

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 42.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 302.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 244, 245.
[4] *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 275-278.

saved must be ready to go the whole way with Christ, both in suffering and in joy, until grace and truth have their complete and triumphant work in him.

Holding as he did that salvation is a spiritual process —the birth, the growth, the life of a divine nature in the soul of man—Job Scott thought extremely little of what he calls "notions," *i.e.* theoretical plans or schemes of salvation. He speaks of these as "linsey-woolsey garments" which cover, but do not change those who put them on. They are all "Babels which man has built." They are all "inventions," "ladders to enable men to climb up some other way" than the real way. This salvation is only "speculative salvation," "imaginary salvation," and though "it passes current" in the churches, it is never the real coin of the spiritual realm. He was intensely opposed to the doctrine of "imputed righteousness." "Imputation of Christ's righteousness to sinners," he says, "so as to reconcile them to God in a state of actual sin or alienation from Him, is as impossible as to reconcile light and darkness, or Christ and Belial. It is a phantom that has risen up in the fogs and mists of benighted minds." [1] "God will forever impute sin to the soul that liveth in it," he bravely declares in one of his treatises. Doctrines and opinions have "induced millions to rest the eternal salvation of their immortal souls upon a mere broken reed of imputed righteousness." [2]

He was always strongly opposed to the traditional view of the Scriptures. They are "very good means of information," he says, but they are still "external," and they cannot take the place of the operation of the divine Spirit in the soul.[3] He was, further, thoroughly antagonistic to the prevailing orthodox conception of the Trinity. "God is forever *one*. There is no twain in Him. It is as dark as Egyptian darkness to talk of three external persons in the only one God." [4] He holds that

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 485. This passage is from Scott's famous Essay, "On Salvation by Christ."

[2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 307 and 314.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 44.

[4] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 516. This passage is from Scott's Essay, "On Salvation by Christ."

God as Spirit has always been striving to be born in men and to beget "the seed which bruises the serpent's head" and to "bring forth His son." The Christian religion, he declares, did not first commence when Christ was born of the Virgin Mary,[1] for in all ages the everlasting Father has united Himself with man and has revealed His Immanuel nature. But this Immanuel nature, this revelation of sonship, once reached its supreme eminence in Christ, who was "a prepared body" for a super-eminent revelation; but at the same time every spiritual babe, that is begotten and born of God, is truly the offspring of God, is born of the same holy seed, and "so Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren."[2]

This brief review of Scott's interpretation of Christianity is sufficient to show that he was not orthodox in the usual meaning of the word, that he was, instead, an *energist* or *vitalist* before his time. He went far beyond the orthodox position and insisted on a process of life which reproduced the Christ-Spirit and which conquered sin and exhibited real holiness of life in man's nature. "Some may call me an heretic," he writes, "when I confess unto them that I expect no final benefit from the death of Jesus, in any other way than through fellowship with Him in His sufferings."[3] And again, he asserts, "Christ has not conquered to excuse *us*, but that we should follow His steps."[4] At the time of his death in 1793, Job Scott was in almost universal favour as a Minister, and no breath of suspicion against his orthodoxy seems to have been breathed during his lifetime, though a few Friends hesitated to endorse him.

In a very short time after his departure, however, there appeared in the meetings of Ireland a strong wave of reaction against evangelical thought and orthodox theology, brought to expression especially as a reaction from the preaching of David Sands. The exponents of this reaction pushed much further than any Friends before them had done in the direction of an attempt to

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 526.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 531.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 221.
[4] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 520.

make Christianity square with reason. They had undoubtedly been reading the books which expressed the rationalism of the "enlightenment," and they were minded to offset the literalism and evangelical teaching which they saw spreading in Ireland. Their position was stated in more extreme fashion than Job Scott would have endorsed, and these Irish innovators lacked the restraint and balance which marked the Rhode Island saint, but nevertheless, they were fearlessly following out the lines of thought laid down in his sermons and in his Journal and Treatises.

The leading spirit in this movement of reaction against the growing orthodox tendencies was Abraham Shackleton of Ballitore, a refined, cultured man, of singular sensitiveness to truth and integrity, a person of large intelligence and wide reading, whose moral and spiritual insight revolted from the crude interpretations of Scripture which prevailed in his day. The crux of his difficulty lay in the supposed divine commands in the Old Testament enjoining the children of Israel to wage wars of extermination against Canaanite peoples and sanctioning other acts which seemed to Shackleton's sensitive soul immoral.

Shackleton deeply felt that the religious Society to which he belonged was in a low and declined spiritual state, that the inner life and power had waned, that external forms of discipline and custom had come into sway in an unbearable degree, and that there were signs of an attempt to restore the pristine power of the Society by a superficial adoption of doctrines and creeds, and by methods which seemed to him a surrender of the central Quaker principle. He had a holy fear of anything which concealed a diseased inner condition under an external covering of apparent piety, and he was not in the least afraid of saying what he thought.

In 1797 he entered into a discussion with a fellow Elder of Leinster Quarterly Meeting on the tender subject of "the Hebrew wars." The other Elder maintained that it was "an essential article of Christian faith" to believe

that the wars for the extirpation of the Canaanites "were undertaken by the express command of God." Shackleton insisted that this view was "highly derogatory of the character of the unchangeable God," and that therefore these alleged commands of God to perform acts that were "perfidious, cruel and unjust" were either "willful and impious pretenses on the part of the perpetrators or of the original historians; or subsequent interpolations in the history." In any case they could have no genuine claim to the appellation of "holy" or "sacred Scriptures." God, he asserted, cannot, by miraculous interposition of power, command men in one age to perform actions which in another age He forbids as sinful, and it must be taken as settled that a God of purity, holiness, peace and love has never been the author or instigator of wars nor of any acts of cruelty, treachery, fraud or vengeance.[1] One who reads to-day this brave declaration of a sensitive soul in the eighteenth century must feel a thrill of appreciation for his determination not to believe what was untrue to the nature of God. He in his quiet, simple way had taken the position of Job. He was perplexed. He was in the shadow of a mystery. But one thing was clear: God who is love in the New Testament cannot in a former time have been a God of vengeance. He will stake his reputation, his standing in the Society, even his life, against false pleadings in defence of God. He was, like other honest men of his time, unable to solve the mystery. He is no rebel against the truth. He is only a seeker for the truth—a seeker who is in a jungle which he himself has not constructed. He was doing the best he could to find a way out, but whether he gets out or not he is resolved to preserve his faith in the righteousness and goodness of God. That genuine *faith* was then and is now the best gift one can contribute to his people.

Early in the year 1798 William Savery of Philadelphia, strongly evangelical in spirit, as we have seen, and a preacher of unusual power, had an interview with Abraham

[1] Rathbone, *A Narrative of Events in Ireland*, pp. 50-51.

Shackleton, who went forty miles to consult the Philadelphian. William Savery was plainly shocked at the radical views of the Irish Friend, and he concluded that the latter and his sympathizers were caught in "the vortex of Deism" and were being carried on into atheism. Shackleton was throughout the long interview "lovingly disposed" but "evidently wrong in many of his opinions," and he gave William Savery "much exercise" and a portentous dream.[1] It is too much to expect that William Savery should have understood Shackleton's state of mind. Deism seemed to him an awful apostasy from the truth and he quite naturally jumped to the conclusion that this rationally-minded Friend was a deist if not an atheist. He could not get into sympathetic relation with the Irish Friend's state. He clapped a label on it, named it with the dread name, and then could only meet it with a definite antidote. It would have taken a very unusual "cure of souls" to have spoken to Shackleton's condition, but one can believe that Job Scott with his inward depth and spiritual insight would have reached him and dispelled the cloud under which he was living. We must be thankful for what William Savery did for Elizabeth Fry and not be critical of him for having failed to clear the sky for a wholly different type of seeker.

The national Yearly Meeting of Ireland for 1798 emphasized the necessity of keeping "unity in faith and principle," and was "sorrowfully convinced that a disposition hath appeared tending to weaken the general testimony, which we as a people have maintained, as to the origin, use and advantage of these records [Scriptures]." The body of Friends at this time expressed the judgment that "a standard should be lifted up against the spirit of speculation and unbelief," and that Friends who "persist in maintaining such sentiments and doctrines and do not condemn their conduct" should be disowned.[2]

Shackleton gradually pushed his views to an extreme position as the Meetings for Discipline advanced in their

[1] Savery's *Journal*, pp. 404-407.
[2] Rathbone, *op. cit.* pp. 52-54.

attempts to secure uniformity and to restrict individual opinion. He believed that he was fighting for the sacred right of private judgment, against the enthronement of dogmas of belief, against religious bigotry and blindness, and he was strongly impressed with the feeling that the Society was attempting to "stop the flowing of an irresistible ocean" of fresh and vital thought. He held, with all the intensity of his Irish nature, to the supreme importance of the doctrine of an inward, immediate and universal revelation from God, manifested in the heart of every individual human being, which is superior to any other kind of revelation. He believed in all honour and honesty that he held the true Quaker faith, that he was safeguarding the basis of pure moral life, and he knew of no other way of dealing with the urgent problem of inadequate morality in Old Testament books than to challenge it in the name of the light in his own soul and to deny that these sections of the Bible were from God.

John Hancock, of Lisburn, Ireland, took a similar stand to that taken by Abraham Shackleton, though Hancock thought his position through more carefully and systematically and gave larger expression to it. In 1801 he discontinued the attendance of meetings for worship and informed his Monthly Meeting that he believed it to be his duty to separate himself from the Society, soon after which step he was disowned. He had been a zealous, faithful member, orderly in conduct and solid in character. He was a recorded Minister and a deep and serious thinker. He shared with Shackleton the feeling that his beloved Society had become, or was fast becoming, a stereotyped and stagnant body, over-busy with rules and disciplinary regulations and devoid of living vision for the supreme issues of the times. He had none of the critical insight which has come with modern historical scholarship, but he was profoundly convinced that there were passages in the Old Testament which could not be squared with the soul's highest conception of God. He boldly challenged the spurious ways of getting around the difficulty by the use of allegory or by assuming different

"dispensations" in which God had different ways of dealing with men, and he highly resolved not to seem to believe what in his soul he did not believe. He was aroused to positive and explicit expression of view by the growing tendency, which he observed on the part of Friends, to adopt the Scriptures as containing the whole body of necessary truth. He himself stood with all the fervour, which his years of experience had given him, for the seed truth of Quaker faith that Christ works within the heart, revealing the grace of God, testifying against sin, exhibiting the power of the Spirit, and drawing men into a divine kingdom of life and light and love. But he found it impossible to conceive that this God, who revealed Himself as grace and light, who has given us "a holy pattern of unblemished excellence in Christ," can at an earlier time have been moved by depraved passions and can have commanded his people to do things which are wicked! In his tract explaining his withdrawal, he declares that he cannot receive the Scriptures as "unmixed truth," and he rejects the doctrine of the fall of Adam and imputed sin and also the doctrine of imputed righteousness in Christ, and he sets himself against the whole tendency to reduce religion to doctrinal statements and declarations of creed.[1]

Having found the use of his pen, Hancock went on further than he intended in his exposition, though he succeeded in preserving a calm spirit and always refused to be drawn into hot controversy. His series of tracts enable the present-day reader to see very clearly how difficult it was a hundred years ago for an honest, sincere person to face the issues, which were forced upon him under the assumption that every statement of the Old Testament was an infallible word of God for all time, without going further in the direction of scepticism than he intended to go. Hancock has no sympathy whatever with the "relaxed morals" and the "defective" manner of life which he finds in the characters of many who have

[1] *Reasons for Withdrawing from Society with the People called Quakers* (Belfast, 1802), 13 pages.

questioned the authority of Scripture, but he believes that those who know the Light within, who have the sure guide of experience and who take Christ as the perfect pattern, will not go astray even though they refuse to accept the infallibility of Scripture and challenge all formulation of doctrine. One can hardly be surprised, however, that "much outcry was raised" against him on account of his "sentiments," and the present-day reader of his tracts is deeply impressed with the tragedy of the struggle which was honestly pressed on both sides, and he can see that with growing knowledge nothing could have saved our reverence and appreciation for the Bible if it had not been for the intellectual relief which came with the new insight of historical criticism.[1]

John Rogers, George Thompson, Ann Robinson, and many other influential members of the Society in Ireland took a similar position and the defection became widespread and extremely serious. The movement was primarily an intellectual awakening. It was directed against crude views, against the excessive application of discipline, especially in matters pertaining to marriage regulations, against invasions of personal liberty of thought, against the tendency to adopt evangelical phraseology and habits of mind; but to the faithful, conservative membership it looked like an assault upon the citadel of Zion and no quarter was given to "the disturbers." A very large number of the most intelligent and progressive members were disowned or withdrew, and those who were left to constitute the Society naturally became more devoted than before to the views and positions and practices that had been attacked by the left wing; and at the same time the Society was weakened by losing so many of its intellectual members who were endeavouring to understand their time.[2]

[1] Besides the tract already mentioned, Hancock wrote: *Additional Observations; A Friendly Expostulation;* and *Serious Considerations.*

[2] John Rogers, whose views are given in *A Friendly Expostulation* (pp. 80-93), answers the charge that he has been dabbling in French philosophy and Tom Paine. He says: "I may say I never knew there was such a thing, neither am I at all acquainted with what French principles are; and as to T. Paine's writings, I *never* to my knowledge saw them, nor heard them, neither do I know the nature

Serious as was the defection in Ireland, it was destined to be the precursor of still more serious events. The lines of thought had been slowly diverging in all sections of the Society and it was only a question of time when some increase of emphasis one way or the other would produce a crisis. The first marked stage of the crisis came to light as a result of the European visit of an American Quaker Minister named Hannah Barnard. Her maiden name was Hannah Jenkins, and she was born of Baptist parents in 1754. About the eighteenth year of her age she became convinced of the truth of the principles professed by Friends and at her own request was admitted into membership with them. She afterwards married Peter Barnard of Hudson, New York, who was already a Friend. In the language of that time, "She became obedient to the manifestations of divine grace in her own mind" and began to bear "a public testimony" to the truth. She was encouraged and strengthened by the sympathy and counsel of her friends, and her gift as a Minister was soon acknowledged and recorded by her meeting. She was a woman, as all who knew her testify, of superior insight and power. She read and meditated and thought, and gained a comprehension and outlook somewhat wider and more clear than that of most Friends of her time. Her manner of speaking was eloquent, impressive and weighty; she commanded respect, and she could hold the attention of large audiences when she spoke. She won general esteem and was much beloved and welcomed wherever she went in her extensive itinerant labours. She gradually rose to considerable eminence as a Minister, and until her views were questioned in England she had aroused no suspicion of unsoundness, but on the contrary had "the unity and concurrence" of Friends in all the sections where she was known.[1] It is evident, however, that she held somewhat "advanced"

of them," p. 92. The entire movement is reported at length in Rathbone's *A Narrative of Events*, by one who sympathized with the recalcitrants.

[1] For fuller accounts of her personal traits and characteristics see *The Yorkshireman*, vol. v. p. 28, and Thomas Foster, *A Narrative of the Proceedings in the Case of Hannah Barnard* (London, 1804), pp. ix, x.

views even before her visit abroad, though these views were always cautiously expressed and presented with due and becoming restraint.

In the year 1797 she requested Hudson Monthly Meeting to grant her a certificate and testimony of approbation, authorizing her to travel "on a religious concern" in Europe. The certificate was granted in full unity. She was declared to be "a Friend in esteem with us"; her ministry is pronounced to be "sound and edifying," manifesting "comfortable evidences of her call." The hope is expressed that she may be able to attend to her exercise, "singly eyeing the pointings of Truth in all her movements," and "return with that peace that is the never-failing reward of faithful services." This certificate received the complete and hearty endorsement of Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting, 8th November 1797, and of New York Yearly Meeting in May 1798.

Hannah Barnard and her companion, Elizabeth Coggeshall of Rhode Island, arrived in England in July 1798, and they visited with much satisfaction to Friends generally the meetings in England, Scotland and Ireland.[1] During her extensive labours throughout the centres of Friends in Ireland Hannah Barnard apparently came into intimate fellowship with those who questioned the historical accuracy and the moral elevation of some of the Old Testament narratives. She had already arrived on her own account at a similar position, but her progressive views appear to have been strengthened and increased by her intercourse with Friends in Ireland. She must, however, have been very discreet since, upon her departure, "the Yearly Meeting

[1] "Elizabeth Coggeshall (*née* Hosier) was born in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1770. She had shrunk from this foreign visit when she was 'first impressed with the apprehension' that it was laid upon her. 'This seemed a step of such magnitude that my nature shrunk from it exceedingly and I made many excuses.' About this time she was informed that a Friend from another Yearly Meeting [Hannah Barnard] had a similar prospect, which tended to strengthen her fearful, doubting mind. She laid her concern before her Monthly Meeting in Second Month 1798 to go as companion to said Friend,—which was so accompanied by the baptizing power of truth, that it was fully united with: but Friends objected to her going as *companion*, preferring to leave her at liberty to proceed in the performance of this service independently of the concern of another. 'This,' she remarked, 'was very trying to me at that time, but I afterwards saw the wisdom of their judgment.'" *Memoir of Elizabeth Coggeshall* (Philadelphia, 1908), p. 16.

of Ministers and Elders for the nation of Ireland" in May 1800 gave her a certificate of unity and approval. This certificate emphatically declares :

In the course of her religious labours amongst us, we believe it was her concern by example and precept, to inculcate the doctrines of the Gospel, and to excite Friends to be not only in profession, but in practice, the humble, self-denying followers of Christ. She had meetings with those of other societies, in several parts of this nation, we believe to general satisfaction. With desires she may be favoured to continue and conclude her religious labours in Europe consistent with the Divine Will, and (if permitted thereby) to return to her native land and near connections, with the income of peace, we conclude your friends, brethren and sisters.[1]

A few weeks later, at the time of London Yearly Meeting, Hannah Barnard requested the Meeting of Ministers and Elders to give her and her companion a certificate of concurrence for a proposed visit on the continent of Europe. On this occasion, David Sands, also of New York Yearly Meeting and then on a religious visit in Great Britain, and Joseph Williams, an Irish Elder, objected to the granting of the certificate on the ground that Hannah Barnard's ministry differed in some points from the belief and doctrine held by Friends, and in the face of these objections the Ministers and Elders declined to issue the certificate, and the "case" of the Friend in question was referred to the London Morning Meeting.[2]

[1] Foster's *Narrative*, p. 4 ; also given in Rathbone's *A Narrative*, p. 107.

[2] This "case" appears to have been instigated entirely on the initiative of David Sands. Joseph Williams had been present when the meeting in Ireland endorsed Hannah Barnard and he offered no objection to the endorsement. David Sands had been the persistent opponent of the liberal movement in Ireland ; he was the foremost representative of evangelical views, and was naturally keen to scent danger in the teachings of his own country-woman which were in many points similar to those of the advanced Irish Friends. *The Yorkshireman* declares that Hannah Barnard had both in Ireland and in England "a party in her favour" (vol. v. p. 18). Elizabeth Coggeshall had been her close companion in labour and was so much in unity with her still that she was ready to go forward to the Continent with her. The *Memoirs of Elizabeth Coggeshall* state : "In the Select Meeting [of London Y.M., 1800] our dear Friend [E. C.] opened her prospect of visiting Friends on the Continent of Europe, with which much unity and sympathy was expressed." Hannah Barnard thereupon proposed to accompany her former companion. It was then that opposition arose and disunity was expressed with "the religious opinions which she had advanced and which they deemed unsound" (p. 19). Elizabeth Coggeshall adds : "This was a close trial to the affectionate part"—in fact she gave up her own "prospect" when the

From this point onward the story is a complicated tangle of opposing views from which the pure truth is not easily found. I shall not ask the reader to search with me the devious paths that wind back and forth through this now nearly forgotten jungle. The only thing which greatly concerns us is to discover, if we can do so, what the different parties in this pitiful controversy of more than a hundred years ago really believed and aimed at.

The primary issue against Hannah Barnard, on the part of those who opposed her, was "her erroneous view concerning war." It was charged, and the charge was sustained by her own confession, that "she promoted a disbelief of some parts of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; particularly those which assert that the Almighty commanded the Israelites to make war upon other nations."[1] In this position she was thus in complete accord with those who led the Irish defection. It soon appeared, however, as the investigations proceeded, that she questioned the historical accuracy of many other passages in Scripture, particularly those passages involving the miraculous. She was definitely asked what her belief was in respect to the miraculous conception of Jesus, and her answer was that "it had not been revealed to her." She claimed throughout the controversy that her views were in complete accord with those of Penn, Penington, Barclay, Thomas Ellwood and Job Scott, and that a religious experience was something very different from "a belief in historical facts." In her own summary of what she had said in the several conferences between herself and the committees appointed to deal with her case, she brings her own religious faith very clearly into light. One is impressed with her honest, sincere, brave and straightforward manner. She does not cover up her real beliefs and she frankly admits that she diverges, and has for many years diverged, in view from the generally

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meeting declined to unite with Hannah Barnard for her companion. It would seem, therefore, that Elizabeth Coggeshall could not at this time have discovered much that was wrong with her friend's ministry.

[1] Foster's *Narrative*, p. 5.

accepted beliefs of the Friends of her time. She reveals a restrained rationalistic temper of mind, and she shows a much keener ethical analysis than that exhibited by the Friends who challenged her. She was a gentle forerunner of our time, but she had the misfortune to live in a period that could not allow deviation in thought, for there was only one current name for views which did not square with categories of orthodoxy. She was given to understand that she must either believe the beliefs which had come to be "considered essential to Christianity," or be named by one of the ugly words of the time, "deist," "infidel," "atheist." She was in fact none of these, but only an honest soul trying in a difficult crisis of religious transition to find her way through from a belief which her spirit had outgrown to a faith which satisfied her deepest awakened nature.

"I thought it highly necessary to examine," she told the committee, "the grounds of the credibility of any writings, whenever an implicit and full belief in the whole of them, was insisted on, as the measure and condition of Christian communion. It was thus I had been excited to an examination, which led me into the knowledge of many circumstances respecting them, which perhaps I never should have heard, or thought of, had I not been dragged into it, in the manner I had been. And it was on that account, that I had called, and still continued to call on them, and the Society at large, to make the same enquiry."[1] "I found myself reduced," she said, "to the alternative of either believing that the Almighty's nature and will were changeable like those of a finite man or that it never was his positive will and pleasure for his rational creatures to destroy one another's lives in any age of the world."

She adds:

In my opinion, the credulity with which those records had been implicitly stamped with divine infallibility had been, as it were, the very grindstone on which swords had been ground, for many years, among professed Christians.[2]

She laid the important stress, as her contemporaries testify, upon the necessity of putting on Christ experiment-

[1] Foster's *Narrative*, p. 56. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 120, 121.

ally after the manner of the mystics both within and outside the Society to which she belonged.

The following long extract from her summary will enable the reader to see quite adequately both her positive and her negative position. She cannot believe in the infallibility of Scripture records but she has unbounded confidence in inward illumination.

With regard to the miraculous conception and miracles of Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, I told them, I did not call them in question; and that I fully believed in the Divine Power, and right, to produce those or any other miracles, in that, or any other age of the world; but that I did not consider them essential points of practical faith. And, as historic facts, I readily confessed my ignorance, as to their positive and literal certainty; and I believed it my duty to hold up a distinction, in point of essentiality, between doctrinal truths and historic facts, and the evidence on which they respectively and separately depended, viz. The first on the evidence of Divine conviction or illumination on the mind, whereby it becomes revealed truth to us, as individuals; which is the living, sure, and substantial evidence, whereon everything rests, which is essentially necessary to be believed and regarded, as the rule of our relative duties to God and man: whereas, the latter must, in the ordinary course of things, depend solely on the credit of the historian. . . .

And though I have expressed my sentiments, in part, respecting the light in which I view some parts of the Scriptures, I here add my belief, in a more full and general manner, by acknowledging, that though I readily grant, that in them, as an outward written declaration, is contained every doctrine or precept necessary to be believed, and reduced to practice, yet, nothing is revealed truth to me, as doctrine, until it is sealed as such on the mind, through the illumination of that uncreated word of God, or divine light, and intelligence, to which the Scriptures, as well as the writings of many other enlightened authors, of different ages, bear plentiful testimony. . . . I therefore do not attach the idea or title of divine infallibility to any Society as such, or to any book, or books, in the world; but to the great source of eternal truth only.[1]

On account of these beliefs Hannah Barnard, whose case had been referred to Devonshire House Monthly

[1] Foster's *Narrative*, pp. 122, 123.

Meeting, in London, was officially advised to "desist from preaching and return home." She appealed from this decision to the Quarterly Meeting for London and Middlesex. This meeting confirmed the original decision. Whereupon she appealed to the Yearly Meeting. Once more the advice of the Monthly Meeting was sustained. Full accounts of the official proceedings in London were transmitted to Hudson Monthly Meeting, in the State of New York, where final action belonged. Unfortunately other accounts besides the official ones were sent to Hannah Barnard's friends at home, and it would appear that a prejudice against her was produced through this private correspondence, though it is probable that the home meetings would have taken the course they did take even without this foreign incentive.

Hudson Monthly Meeting in the first instance (26th January 1802) decided that Hannah Barnard should "be silent as a Minister." At a later date (22nd June 1802) the Monthly Meeting took extreme action, in a minute stating:

> We can no longer hold religious fellowship with the said Hannah Barnard; but disown her from being any longer a member of our society, until, by attending to the convicting operation of the spirit of truth, in her own mind, she may become sensible of her deviations, and evince a change of heart and sentiment, and manifest a disposition to become reconciled to us.[1]

This decision was appealed by Hannah Barnard to the Quarterly Meeting, where it was sustained, and then to New York Yearly Meeting, where the same course was taken; and after a period of storm and stress, such as few Friends have passed through, she was flung out of membership as a heretic.

The anti-evangelical tendency, which came thus strongly into view in the Irish liberal movement and in the person of Hannah Barnard, produced in turn an emphatic reaction in the direction of orthodoxy. Hannah Barnard's "case," as it was conducted both in England

[1] Foster's *Narrative*, p. 68.

and in New York, stirred intense feeling, and differentiated Friends more sharply than before into two groups—those who sympathized with her and who were thus inclined toward a liberal or advanced type of thought, and those who were shocked at her views and who felt that the Society must draw the lines of its faith more definitely in accord with orthodox standards.[1] The immediate effect of the upheaval is well described by William Matthews, who was a sympathizer with Hannah Barnard, but whose account is nevertheless borne out by the facts:

She was enjoined silence as a minister, and the rumour of her heterodoxy spread far and wide. All her former Gospel services, by which many had once believed themselves edified, seemed to be willingly buried under a cloud of prejudices. Opinions were imputed to her which she never held: calumny was encouraged among the superficial and ignorant: and those of her own sex who could neither fathom her understanding, nor approach to her excellencies, were in the common habit of avoiding her as deluded, as dangerous, and as fallen from almost every thing that was good! The youth, to whom her benevolence strongly attached her, were taught to refrain from her company! But, what was most unpleasant, in public meetings which she frequented for silent worship, the galleries of London sounded with innuendos of judgment and reproach. The general themes of love and good works seemed for a while to have lost their importance; and the public trumpets of the minor prophets, male and female, were mostly sounded to a *new tune, viz. to the doctrine of implicit faith; of salvation through faith; faith in all the scriptures; and lamentations over the spirit of unbelief; as though some strange monster of unbelief had beset the society, and was attempting to destroy the very ground of all security, present and eternal.* Nor were there wanting persons of reputed religious eminence (though the number might be few), who employed the pen to circulate a kind of sacred derision, imputing to her principles of Deism, and tendencies to the most dangerous scepticism and infidelity! Those few of her sincere friends who continued their hospitality and affection to her, till the time of her final appeal should arrive, were considered and classed as favourers of libertinism and unworthiness; a stigma rested on them; and

[1] Hannah Barnard's side was championed in the pamphlet controversy by *Amicus* (William Matthews, of Bath) and *Verax* (John Evans). The other side was presented by *Vindex* (Joseph Gurney Bevan) and by *Christicola* (John Bevans, jun.).

even their fellowship and company were avoided. This account may be considered hereafter as exaggerated, but there are at present sufficient witnesses of the truth of the statement: and I give it as a warning proof of the effects of narrowness and bigotry of mind, which are ever to be expected from similar occasions, unless those who succeed to activity in the present and future generations, be more careful to guard against the spirit of prejudice, and its consequent errors.[1]

This evangelical wave, with its emotional stress and the growing sensitiveness to unsoundness, comes vividly to light across the century of years in a manuscript found among the papers of the late George Penney, J.P., of Poole (1783–1853). This account was written in 1801.

The opinions which have lately been disseminated have caused much uneasiness, having divided near Connections Families & Friends from each other; and tho' these Opinions do not appear to increase, they yet cannot but be deplored in consideration of the hurtful tendency of them.

A remarkable Circumstance occurred yesterday week at the Peel Meeting [London], in the Afternoon, a young Man who had been intimate with Hannah Barnard, and had pretty greedily swallowed her sentiments, stood up, and in an awful and tender Manner expressed the uncommon agony of Soul he had lately endured—that he had been tempted to doubt of the first Parts of the Scriptures; such as the Miraculous conception, and the Wars of the Jews, and so on step by step, till both the old and new Testament were doubted; from doubts he proceeded to disbelief, until he became a thorough Deist, and now his morality began to be tried, the obligation to strict uprightness, which the Religion of Jesus Christ inspired him with, seemed gradually dissipated, and he became a perfect Atheist—here wandering as in the dark, every Man's hand apparently lifted up against him, he found himself a Vagabond upon the Earth. Divine goodness still followed him, tho' with chastening, he was repeatedly warned to expose himself in that public manner as the only means of experiencing a return of Divine Favour, and as an atonement for his thus leaving his Lord & Master, and had he not thus been strengthened to express himself, he believed he could not have existed another Day, it had been sealed upon his

[1] *The Recorder: being a collection of Tracts and Disquisitions, chiefly relative to the Modern State and Principles of the People called Quakers*, vol. i., by William Matthews, of Bath. Published by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard (London, 1802), pp. 121, 122.

Mind that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every Tongue confess.

It brought a great Weight and solemnity over the Meeting, added to this striking and extraordinary occurrence another Young Man at the close of the Meeting, stood up & expressed himself much to the same purpose, with some very awful cautions to any one who might be under similar Temptations.[1]

Joseph Gurney Bevan was the leader in England of this conservative party, though Luke Howard, John Bevans, jun., and John Alsop stood solidly with him.[2] He was born in London in 1753, and received a very unusual education for a Friend of that century. He was a good classical scholar, widely read in literature ancient and modern, and he was a diligent and careful student of the Greek New Testament. He formed a habit of introspection during his early religious life, and he watched the spiritual state of his mind somewhat after the manner of Doctor John Rutty. In his *Journal* of self-examination we find entries like this:

Hoped meeting was beginning to grow better, when it was broken up. Condemned myself in the evening, for recurring to a loose passage, for proof of the Latinity of what I had written on a sacred subject.

At the Monthly Meeting; pretty calm, and mind close to the concerns of it. Felt spiritual pride: still the first sitting ended with tenderness of spirit, and the latter with calmness. Went out, after I had gone up for bed, to speak to a person about lying.

A pretty even day; a slight degree of unity with the spirit of Thomas Ellwood, who says, "I found no centre but the Lord," or something like it.

Particularly low at the afternoon meeting; but towards the close rather cleared up.

Very low part of the meeting; better towards the close.

Wandering at meeting; and troubled in the evening, for having spoken with too little caution.

Let warmth arise in conversation, apparently on the side of right; which gave occasion to repentance.

Uncomfortable for want of patience: an expected storm averted by condescension.

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[1] Printed in *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, vol. x. no. 3, p. 180.

[2] Hannah Barnard calls Joseph Gurney Bevan "the principal pleader" against her, Foster's *Narrative*, p. 27.

At meeting, and Monthly Meeting, with some calm impression of the saying—"We are unprofitable servants"; yet, afterwards, overshot my mark by saying too much at a time.[1]

Sensitive about his own inner state, he became equally sensitive to the prevalent currents of thought. The age seemed to him drifting toward scepticism, "under the name of free inquiry," and when the tendency, which appeared to him fraught with grave danger, swept into the little fold to which he belonged, he was, in the language of his time, "found as a faithful watchman at his post"—"diligent in the defence of the faith of his predecessors."[2] He made an examination of the writings of early Friends[3] in order to show that they were not "Unitarians," and he also wrote a little book on revelation called *Thoughts on Reason and Revelation* (1805). In both these treatises he was, as he once expressed it, strenuous for the orthodox position and for soundness of opinion. The net result of his life, which blended intense inward piety with devotion to the truths of Scripture interpreted in an evangelical sense, was to carry the Society of Friends a long way toward a new religious emphasis and toward the creation of a new atmosphere of faith.

The book written by John Bevans, jun.—*A Defence of the Christian Doctrines of the Society of Friends against the charge of Socinianism* (1805)—goes the whole way toward the evangelical position as held, for instance, by Newton and Cowper.

Man is a fallen and ruined being, whose depraved state is the result of Adam's fall. It is necessary in order to be a Christian to believe in the historical accuracy of every part of Scripture, in the positive and literal certainty of miracles, in the miraculous conception of Christ, in the doctrine of the Trinity, and in the salvation of fallen man through the vicarious sacrifice of a holy Redeemer.

[1] *Extracts from the Letters and Other Writings of the late Joseph Gurney Bevan* (London, 1821), pp. 16-23.

[2] *Extracts*, p. 31.

[3] *An Examination of the first Part of a Pamphlet called "An Appeal to the Society of Friends,"* 8vo, 1802, 38 pages.

He devotes two hundred and seventy-nine pages to a consideration of "the innovating systems of our rational Christians," but he did some "innovating" himself, and he goes so far with his new orthodoxy as to insist that "the truth of the Bible must stand or fall as we receive or reject the divine sanction for the Jewish wars."[1] John Alsop in the course of the investigation of Hannah Barnard declared that the miraculous conception and the miracles of Christ "were the very foundation of Christianity,"[2] and already at this period Luke Howard (1772–1864), a man of great ability and literary power, was starting on the lines of thought which finally took him all the way to the position of the "Beaconites"—*i.e.* the position of literalism and ultra-orthodoxy. He was one of the most prominent scientists the Society of Friends has produced. Botany, chemistry, and meteorology were his three fields of interest. He was one of the founders of the science of meteorology. He was a devoted philanthropist, with very wide interests and sympathies. He was intensely religious, working with enthusiasm and devotion for great religious causes, above all for the Bible Society. He was the creator and editor of the remarkable periodical called *The Yorkshireman*, which ran through five volumes (1833–1837). He was one of the first prominent Friends to take a pronounced evangelical position. He was strongly opposed to Hannah Barnard and the movement which was associated with her name. He was anti-mystical, and one of the first Friends of importance to show an uneasiness concerning the doctrine of the inward Light as interpreted by Robert Barclay. He was inclined to a literal interpretation of Scripture, and he was more theological in his sympathies than was the case with most Friends. In 1825 Luke Howard wrote a *Letter containing Observations upon a Treatise written by Job Scott, entitled Salvation by Christ.* The Letter is marked by breadth of view, by learning, and by considerable shrewdness of judgment. Judged by its skill of argument and proper exegesis of Scripture texts it has

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 182.

[2] *A Narrative*, p. 28.

a distinct advantage over Job Scott's Tract, to which it is an answer. But to one looking deeper into the inner meaning of the religious life it moves on a wholly different level of spiritual apprehension. It quite misses the real nature of the religion Job Scott was interpreting—the mystical experience of salvation as an inward process of birth by which God brings forth His Son in the soul. This was a theme which all the great mystics have put in the centre of their message. Luke Howard writes about it, after the manner of Nicodemus, as one who understands nothing of it, takes birth-phrases literally, and is unfamiliar with the mystical way of life. He plainly shows his own bent and learning. He wants the passages of Scripture used in the well-known evangelical sense—setting forth salvation, based upon "the merits and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice" (p. 12). His spirit is fine, he is not small or cramped in his sympathies, but he reveals here, as in all his religious contributions, that he is a devoted adherent of the evangelical revival, and an anti-mystical Friend. The course which this able and, it should be added, good man finally took in joining the Beaconite movement, indicated only the full maturing of a tendency which had for a long time been differentiating him from the mystical faith and experience of Friends.[1]

In America the lines of divergence became more marked with each year that followed "the Barnard controversy," and it is perfectly evident that during the years between 1800 and 1827—the year of the great separation—the chasm was growing steadily wider. For more than twenty years the Meeting for Sufferings in New England was engaged on the task of editing and publishing the *Journal* and the doctrinal writings of Job Scott, and it is possible to detect in the minutes of the meeting an increasing fear on the part of some Friends of his interpretation of Christianity. The Meeting for Sufferings in New England asked the Meetings for Sufferings in New York and in Philadelphia to co-operate with them in the

[1] See his interesting tract: *An Appeal to the Christian Public against a Sentence of Disownment.* London, 1838.

publication of some of Scott's Essays. Philadelphia Friends were cautious from the start and wrote in 1799: "We cannot see our way at present with sufficient clearness to fall in with the proposal." "We think the same subjects have been more properly *and more safely* treated upon by some of our ancient Friends." After seven years of consideration (!) New York Friends answered that they found

some abstruse points of doctrine which our beloved Friend had treated of, and which appeared to us of a nature so delicate as to admit of varied applications and constructions and might therefore rather lead into curious criticism and disquisitions than tend to open the understanding or improve the heart. Under this prospect of the subject it was thought unsafe and improper to expose to public view sentiments and observations which might have a tendency that way.

New York Friends, however, find "much valuable matter" in the essays.[1]

Henry Tuke's *Principles of Religion* was selected as a standard book for the use of New England Friends in 1806, and though there was a large and influential group of Friends in that Yearly Meeting heartily loyal to the position expounded by Job Scott, there were at the same time many Friends who preferred the language of orthodoxy, and who welcomed the growing evangelical tendencies and who stood for an extensive "expurgation" of the writings of the Providence saint.[2]

On the whole, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Society of Friends made unmistakable progress during the years under review in this chapter. A real awakening was under way, a wider world was opening for many Friends, new interests were forming, and a passion for human service was being born, but the two opposing currents of the age—rational inquiry on the one hand, and on the other the evangelical position that Christianity

[1] *Minutes of New England Meeting for Sufferings*, vol. from 1793 to 1842, especially pp. 72 and 126.

[2] Luke Howard's pamphlet called "*A Letter to a Friend in America; containing Observations upon a Treatise written by Job Scott*, was vigorously answered by "A Friend of Job Scott" in a tract entitled *Review of a Letter from Luke Howard to a Friend in America.*

was something miraculously superadded to the highest human life—were producing in the Society a dangerous eddy which was destined some day to divide the Society. Friends were to learn in bitter experience the truth which a great writer of the nineteenth century announced: "Opinions are but a poor cement of human souls."[1]

[1] Cross, *Life of George Eliot*, vol. ii. (London, 1884), p. 118.

# CHAPTER X

## BEGINNINGS OF A NEW SOCIAL SPIRIT

### I

WE have seen that the eighteenth century was marked in Quaker circles by an abnormal degree of introspection. The gaze by a slowly formed habit unconsciously turned inward rather than outward. The great issues of life were sought within the soul. Consonantly with this attitude the Discipline of the Society became unduly emphasized. The leaders devoted their lives to the business of forming and perfecting "a peculiar people" and this concern far overtopped in importance the missionary aims and the redemptive work of the body. Gradually, too, there came, along with the habit of introspection, a tendency to glorify theological doctrine and to exalt "soundness" in belief. This tendency produced a harvest of tragedy in the nineteenth century, as we shall see. But at the very period when the interest in theology was becoming dominant and disturbing, a new interest appeared that was destined in the ripening of time to bring the Society once more to an era of real spiritual life and power. This new interest was a rediscovery of the beckoning social tasks of humanity.

Little by little Friends had withdrawn from the world which surged around them. They had builded a hedge about themselves, to guard themselves and their children from contamination. They had become like an island in a sea which they never explored or charted. The desire to be "a quiet people," and to avoid all lines of action or activity which might lead to a revival of persecution made Friends timid and conservative in their relation

to public questions. A minute of Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting, adopted in 1792, during the tremendous period of the French Revolution is characteristic of the prevailing attitude.

"This meeting," the minute declares, "advises its members to endeavour to gather to that true quietude of mind, to enable them to act consistently with our peaceable principles in the state of unsettlement which at present exists in the nation. In order rightly to maintain this we apprehend it necessary to avoid uniting in any of the various political Associations which have been formed or may be formed amongst the people. And we particularly caution all our members against imbibing or promoting a spirit of disaffection to the King and to the Government under which we live and enjoy many privileges and favours which merit our grateful subjection thereto." [1]

The subtle spirit of asceticism grew and spread, until the hope of making spiritual conquest of the world waned and almost completely disappeared. It had become a greater thing to build the palace of the individual soul than to "take a city" and transform its social ideals. But fortunately the original spirit of Quakerism never wholly died out. The aspiration for social regeneration which rose so high at the birth of the Society in the Commonwealth period became submerged under other aspirations, but like Arethusa it burst forth again a fresh stream, the same and yet not the same.

The date of this new social interest is somewhat hard to fix. John Woolman is the first Friend in whom the passion breaks forth in intensity. He was, as I have pointed out in an earlier chapter, one of the most profoundly quietistic of all the itinerant ministers. He had no confidence at all in "the arm of the flesh." He looked for all spiritual undertakings to be carried on by "pure" divine initiative and by the direct operation of the Spirit of God. He would not move a step until "that of God," revealed within him, pushed him out and gave him clear directions. And yet with all his introspection and his waiting in the silence of the creature, he had a burning

[1] Taken from J. S. Rowntree's *Yorkshire Q.M. of Friends*, p. 22. It was printed as a preamble to an epistle issued by Esther Tuke.

passion for human betterment. He was palpitatingly sensitive to human suffering. He could not live untouched by the cries and groans, or even by the dumb pains, of a human world in agony. Precious to him as was the purification of his own soul, even more precious to him was the bringing of relief from oppressing burdens of pain or sorrow or suffering resting upon men or women or children. To him more than to any other one person was given the ministry of calling his own Society to the task of liberating the slave. It was his mission also to arouse the Society to a clear sense of the oppressive burden which the love of luxury entails and to call his people to the practice of the spirit of human love to all men: "To turn all we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives."[1]

In one sense it would appear to be true that there never was a time when the social spirit of Quakerism was utterly dead. There was no complete break with that great humanitarian spirit which was an essential feature of the early period of the Quaker movement. There is no drop, no descent, when we pass from the social spirit of George Fox to that of John Woolman. They both knew nothing of any true Christianity which was dissociated from love of fellow-men and service for them both meant "taking up the burden of the world's suffering." John Bellers (1654–1725), who has been called "a veritable phenomenon in the history of Political Economy,"[2] was as sensitive to the miseries of the poor and the sufferings of men as he was to his own pains, and he completely spans the period between Fox and Woolman. We must therefore be careful how we assume that the appearance of the social spirit in the Society of Friends at the opening of the nineteenth century was something wholly new. What was "new" was the wider appeal which it made to the membership as well as the forms of expression through which it revealed itself.

[1] *A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich*, sec. iii.
[2] Karl Marx in *Das Kapital*, 2nd edition, vol. i. p. 515.

But it must not be forgotten that this Quaker social revival, which came to its height with the evangelical awakening early in the nineteenth century, moved within well defined limits. Those who shared the new spirit aimed to relieve suffering, to undo heavy yokes and to set at liberty those that were bruised. They had no thought of changing the social order. They naturally had little conception of the part the environment played in the formation of individual life. They were deeply impressed with the cry of hunger, the sight of rags, and the pitiable situation of people in slave-pens, and in foul, immoral jails. They moved straight against the glaring visible evils which stirred their sensitive souls. They knew little of economics and their sociology was mainly an affair of the heart. We must not expect the impossible. It has taken a whole century to ripen and define our present problems and our present methods of solving them. We view the tragedies of the individual in their wider social setting, and we look for the elimination of the tragic suffering which besets our fellows only when the conditions of life and the whole social order have been profoundly altered. Friends of the present time are busy with these latter questions; their forerunners were equally faithful to the tasks of their age.

Anthony Benezet, a contemporary and intimate friend of Woolman, was, like him, possessed in very high degree by the spirit of service. "I desire," he once wrote, "to the utmost of my abilities to promote the happiness of all men, even of my enemies if I have any." He was, furthermore, highly gifted and equipped for the mission which, he felt, was laid upon him. He was born at St. Quentin in France, in 1713, of a Huguenot family, and after a series of hazardous experiences in France and in Holland his family removed to England, where Anthony received an excellent education. He joined the Society of Friends at the age of fourteen, and four years later, in 1731, he came with his family to Philadelphia. He was for some years (1742–1755) a teacher in the William Penn Charter School, at the end of which period

he established a very successful girls' school of his own. He was a reformer of educational methods, a model disciplinarian for that century, a writer of valuable text-books for schools, and a teacher of rare power.

About the year 1750 he was first awakened to the iniquity of the slave trade and the inhumanity of slavery as a system. From that date to his death he was dedicated to the task of awakening Friends and others to see the iniquity as he saw it, and of arousing a determined opposition to its continuance.

He wrote and printed at his own expense three lucid little books that were destined to have a far-reaching influence. They were: *Some Account of that part of Africa inhabited by Negroes* (1762); *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies on the Calamitous State of Enslaved Negroes* (1766); and *An Historical Account of Guinea: with an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave Trade, its Nature and Calamitous Effects* (1771). Philadelphia Yearly Meeting transmitted Benezet's *Caution and Warning* to London Yearly Meeting with the request that it be reprinted and circulated, particularly among persons attending schools and colleges. This was done and, besides, six hundred copies were sent to the members of both Houses of Parliament. His latest book had the good fortune to fall into the hands of a young Cambridge scholar, Thomas Clarkson, who, through its powerful portrayal of the conditions in slave countries, and the wickedness and brutality of the slave trade, was shaken completely awake and turned into a burning and shining advocate of the entire abolition of the traffic for ever.[1]

But great as was the influence of Benezet's books, his personal influence, by appeal, by correspondence and by the patient practice of love toward the coloured race, was even greater. He carried on an extensive correspondence with prominent men in Europe and America, and he

[1] Clarkson says in his *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* that Benezet's *Account of Guinea* was "instrumental beyond any book ever before published in disseminating a proper knowledge of the slave trade" (*op. cit.* vol. i. p. 169).

seemed to possess a rare skill in discovering strategic persons to push the cause forward. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Granville Sharpe, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Abbé Raynal, Queen Charlotte, John Wesley, George Whitefield and many others were called upon in personal letters to assist in ending this cruel and oppressive wrong. In 1772 he wrote to Richard Shackleton of Ballitore, Ireland, to secure his help in arousing the King and Parliament to a knowledge of the "terrible evil." He skilfully selected Shackleton because he knew that the Irish Quaker was an intimate friend of Edmund Burke: "Thou art closely connected with a person of judgment and weight in the English Parliament, who may be a good instrument in forwarding an inquiry into this potent evil."[1] He not only worked assiduously to arouse bodies of Friends to take extreme steps to free their own members of all implication both with the traffic and with the holding of slaves, but he also watched for every chance to carry forward petitions to the legislatures of the American colonies and to the English Parliament. He was one of the pillars of the famous abolition society which was founded in Philadelphia in 1775. Its official title was "The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Conditions of the African Race." This was the first abolition society formed in America, though a work very similar to that done by this society had for a long time been quietly carried on by the various Yearly Meetings of Friends. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society was undenominational and drew into its membership, for example, such a distinguished citizen as Dr. Benjamin Rush, but the large proportion of its members were Friends, and the minutes were always kept in Quaker style and language. Under its lead and inspiration similar "abolition societies" or "anti-slavery societies"

[1] *Anth ny Benezet* (1713–1784), from the original Memoir written by Roberts Vaux, revised by Wilson Armistead, p. 27. It is an interesting fact that from this period Burke showed himself deeply impressed with the sufferings of the blacks and a sympathetic advocate of their cause.

sprang up in most of the northern states, in all of which Friends formed a solid element.

So faithful were the labours of the pioneer Quaker humanitarians, among whom the most prominent were William Southby, William Burling, Ralph Sandiford, Thomas Hazard of Rhode Island, John Woolman, and Anthony Benezet, that the practice of holding slaves had practically ceased among Friends by the year 1780. The Friends in the southern colonies did not become "clear" of the practice quite as early as did those in the northern, though they were not far behind.[1] From this time until the Proclamation of Emancipation, issued by Abraham Lincoln, Friends were untiring in their efforts to educate negroes where the law allowed it, to end the slave trade, to assist slaves to gain their freedom, and finally to abolish slavery itself.[2]

Friends in Great Britain, living as they did remote from scenes that would burn the iniquity and horror of the evil in upon their souls, were for a long time quiescent upon the subject and were stirred to greater action by sensitive American Friends who visited them, or who reached them through direct correspondence, or through Yearly Meeting epistles. When they were once aroused they became an almost irresistible force.

As early as 1727 London Yearly Meeting adopted a vigorous minute declaring that "it is the sense of this meeting that the importing of negroes from their native country and relatives by Friends is not a commendable nor allowed practice, and is therefore censured by this meeting." In 1758 London Yearly Meeting adopted a still more emphatic minute and inserted a strong message to Friends everywhere in its annual Epistle warning them to be "careful to avoid being in any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from the iniquitous practice of dealing in slaves."[3]

[1] See Stephen B. Weeks: *Southern Quakers and Slavery.*

[2] The rise of anti-slavery sentiment among Friends in the colonial period is reviewed in my volume *The Quakers in the American Colonies.* The work of Friends in America for the abolition of slavery will be dealt with in later chapters of this volume.

[3] *Epistles of London Y.M.*, vol. i. p. 307.

But in spite of this progressive official position the members themselves were in practice far behind the vision of their leaders who constructed the epistles. John Woolman's keen eyes found many members of the Society in England "mixed with the world in the trade to Africa for slaves."[1] There can be no doubt that the closing service of Woolman's life in behalf of the great cause to which he was dedicated bore definite fruit, for the general epistle for 1772 contains a passage wholly in Woolman's lofty spirit. The epistle for that year expresses satisfaction that Friends have "lessened" slavery in America, and it urges Friends to continue the faithful labour, until "through the favour of divine Providence, a traffic so unmerciful and unjust in its nature to a part of our own species made equally with ourselves for immortality, *may come to be considered in its proper light;* and be utterly abolished as a reproach to the Christian profession,"[2] and again, in 1774, the epistle calls for the suppression of "that flagrant injustice to our fellow-creatures, for whom our Saviour shed His precious blood, as well as for others, and to whom He dispenseth a measure of His grace in common with the rest of mankind."[3]

Nine years later, in 1783, Friends in England sent the first petition against the slave trade that was ever presented to Parliament. This action was taken at the urgent suggestion of Friends in Philadelphia.[4]

The following minute was adopted by the Yearly Meeting:

> This Meeting having in a very weighty and solemn Manner considered the recommendation of our Brethren in America to take under consideration an application to those in power, in favour of the poor enslaved Negroes, it is the solid judgment of this meeting that this weighty work should begin by an address to the king.

Thereupon a large committee of men was appointed

[1] *Journal*, p. 262.

[2] *Epistles*, vol. ii. p. 10.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 20.

[4] The Meeting for Sufferings in Philadelphia requested the Meeting for Sufferings in London to petition parliament. The Meeting for Sufferings thereupon brought the subject to London Y.M. for that year, 1783.

"to prepare an address to the king."[1] This committee on further consideration, being informed that a Bill regulating the African trade was about to be brought in the House of Commons, decided that a petition should be sent immediately to Parliament. The following petition was prepared by the committee, signed apparently by all the men present at the Yearly Meeting (two hundred and seventy-three in number), and left in the hands of the Meeting for Sufferings to be presented:

To the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled. The Petition of the people called Quakers, sheweth,

That your Petitioners met in this their Annual Assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the enslaved Negroes, conceive themselves engaged in religious duty to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the Legislature.

Your Petitioners regret that a nation, professing the Christian Faith, should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice, as by cruel treatment of this oppressed race, to fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrines of the Gospel.

Under the countenance of the laws of this Country, many thousands of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to the natural rights of mankind, are held as personal property in cruel bondage; and your Petitioners, being informed that a Bill for the regulation of the African Trade is now before the House, containing a Clause *which restrains the Officers of the African Company from exporting negroes*,—Your Petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression and bloodshed attending this traffic, humbly request, *that this restriction may be extended to all persons whomsoever:* or that the House would grant such other relief in the Premises, as in its wisdom may seem meet.[2]

Lord North said of this Petition that it did all honour to the most humane and philanthropic society in the world.

The following year the Yearly Meeting decided to print and circulate extensively a tract on the evils of the slave trade, prepared by the Meeting for Sufferings, and it took at the same time a positive step in the direction of

[1] *Minutes of Y.M.*, vol. xvii. p. 281.
[2] *Minutes*, vol. xvii. pp. 299, 300.

ending for ever all complicity of its own members with the traffic. This minute on the matter was adopted:

This Meeting being zealously concerned to intercede with those in Authority for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and apprehending that a few under our Name may not be wholly clear, finds itself engaged earnestly to recommend to Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to enquire whether any of their Members are in any way concerned therein, and if any such should be found, that they are laboured with in a Spirit of Love and Meekness, and that a report of the success of such labour be made next year.[1]

In 1786 the Yearly Meeting records its satisfaction that "so few of our members are in any way concerned in the slave trade."[2]

Petitions against the Slave Trade were sent to Parliament in 1790 and again in 1792, and gradually the Society reached a position of settled opposition to the traffic. From the opening of the century Friends in both hemispheres were "clear" of all complicity with the slave trade, were themselves also "clear" in the matter of holding slaves, and they were steadily becoming united in the determined effort to bring about the abolition of the trade in slaves and the legal ownership of them as property.[3]

The foremost leaders of this double cause—the abolition of both the slave trade and the ownership of slaves—in the English Parliament and with the people of Great Britain were William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and Thomas Fowell Buxton. No one of these three great leaders was an actual member of the Society of Friends. T. Fowell Buxton was, however, so closely allied with Friends by birth and marriage connections and by the spirit of his life that his work seems a vital part of Quakerism. His mother was a devoted Friend, Anna Hanbury. He married Hannah Gurney, and came into most intimate and affectionate fellowship with his brothers-

[1] *Minutes*, vol. xvii. p. 446. [2] *Ibid.* vol. xviii. p. 106.

[3] Thomas Clarkson in his *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1808), vol. i. p. 146, says: "In the year 1787 there was not a slave in the possession of an acknowledged Friend."

in-law and sister-in-law, Joseph John Gurney, Samuel Gurney, and Elizabeth Fry. His sister, Anna Buxton, married the famous Quaker minister and philanthropist, William Forster, and he was in very close personal friendship with William Allen of Spitalfields. It was, in fact, William Forster who first inspired T. Fowell Buxton with zeal for the cause of abolition.[1] They were all united together in great humanitarian causes and spiritual labours, and in a very effective way Buxton, who entered Parliament in 1818, was able to carry through in public life what this remarkable religious group conceived and planned in the quiet. Behind Buxton throughout his powerful career of service there stood first this little inner group of select souls, and then later the whole Society of Friends, working through its Meeting for Sufferings and its committees and organizations. Wilberforce and Clarkson were also in spirit very closely bound into the Quaker movement. The former was a lifelong friend of the Gurneys and other well-known Quakers; the latter owed his profound awakening to Anthony Benezet; he worked throughout his entire career in conjunction with Friends, and though never joining the Society, he wrote one of the most important expositions of Quakerism that has ever been written by an outsider—*A Portraiture of Quakerism*, in 3 vols. (London, 1806).

A Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in 1805 for the abolition of the slave trade, which was rejected by only seven votes. This near triumph of the great cause rallied Friends to new exertions. The Yearly Meeting for 1806 adopted this interesting minute on the subject:

> On reading the Minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings on the subject of the Slave Trade, this meeting approves the caution with which the said meeting has conducted its deliberations thereon; and at the same time this meeting rejoices at the great decrease of misery which an Act of Parliament lately made will most probably occasion, and at the principles of humanity and

[1] See *Life of the Right Hon. W. E. Forster*, by T. W. Reid (1888), vol. i. p. 14.

justice, which have been nobly and publicly avowed, by many of those who have been the means of bringing about that measure—it still refers the subject in general to the continued attention of the Meeting for Sufferings; desiring that the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, may, as waited for in singleness of heart, direct its further counsels, either in acting or forbearing, as shall most promote his honour, and the relief of our fellow-creatures, still liable to suffer from the remains of this iniquitous commerce.[1]

The next year the long-desired triumph came. A Bill for the abolition of the slave trade in the British Dominions was brought into the House of Lords in the spring of 1807 and was introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Howich, afterwards Earl Grey. It passed both Houses and received the royal signature on 25th March, enacting that "no slave should be imported into the British colonies after the first day of March 1808." The Yearly Meeting on the 23rd of May 1807 thus recorded its thankgiving:

This [Yearly] Meeting believes it right to record also the gratitude which it feels, on having the privilege of being witness to one of the greatest acts of righteousness that ever dignified the counsels of any nation. And, according to present ability, prays that the Almighty, the source of justice and wisdom, may remember this land for good, *and lead its counsels to such further acts of justice and mercy, as may tend to His glory in* the harmony of His rational creation.[2]

This first task being accomplished, the next great undertaking was for the complete abolition of slavery itself in the British Dominions, and toward this consummation individual Friends now directed their energies. For fifteen years after the abolition of the slave trade, however, there was an interval of inaction before the great fight came on against slavery itself. A few choice spirits in the nation were during these quiet years girding themselves for the immense moral task, but the country, absorbed as it was in the great European struggle, gave little thought to the poor slaves toiling in the West Indies.

[1] *Minutes*, vol. xx. pp. 340, 341.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. xx. pp. 404, 405.

William and Josiah Forster, Joseph John and Samuel Gurney, James Cropper, Luke Howard, William Allen, and Joseph Sturge were distinguished names in the little group of Quakers who forced the issue into public thought and compelled the nation to act. William Forster, born, like Jeremiah, to be a prophet from his very birth, had begun as early as his eighteenth year to bear his testimony against slavery. He was now, in 1808, in the full power of his spiritual mission. Like so many others at this period he refrained absolutely from the consumption or use of any articles, either of food or clothing, that had come to England "through defiled channels."[1] He records, at the age of nineteen, that his heart is "more than usually enlarged in love" toward his fellow-creatures, and especially toward "those who remain in ignorance and darkness and in a very great degree estranged from the joys of religion," "our brethren who are groaning in slavery." "I am firm in the belief," he adds, "that the day is approaching when their cause will come to the throne of Divine Justice with availing authority. O may that day be nearer than many imagine."[2]

As soon as T. Fowell Buxton was elected to Parliament William Forster called upon him to become the "advocate of the slave," as he had already been of the prisoner and of the starving poor.

"The attention and exertions of the wise and good," Forster wrote, "have been directed, not without much success, towards staying the progress of evil, in the abolition of the slave trade; *but now it is certainly time to turn the mind of the British public toward the situation of those in actual slavery.*"[3]

In 1824 William Wilberforce, who had for years been the anti-slavery leader in the House of Commons, now, feeble with age and failing strength, called upon T. Fowell Buxton to take the leadership. Buxton had just delivered one of the greatest speeches of his life — on criminal law — and he had clearly revealed the quality

[1] *Memoirs of William Forster*, edited by Benjamin Seebohm (London, 1865), vol. i. p. 30.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 37.
[3] *Memoirs of Buxton*, edited by his son (Phila., 1849), p. 112.

and fibre of his character. To him Wilberforce wrote as follows :

I have been waiting, with no little solicitude, for a proper time and suitable circumstances of the country, for introducing this great business; and, latterly, for some member of Parliament, who, if I were to retire or to be laid by, would be an eligible leader in this holy enterprise. I have for some time been viewing you in this connexion; and after what passed last night, I can no longer forbear resorting to you, as I formerly did to Pitt, and earnestly conjuring you to take most seriously into consideration, the expediency of your devoting yourself to this *blessed service*, so far as will be consistent with the due discharge of the obligations you have already contracted, and in part so admirably fulfilled, to war against the abuses of our criminal law, both in its structure and administration. Let me then entreat you to form an alliance with me, that may truly be termed holy, and if I should be unable to commence the war (certainly not to be declared this session); and still more, if, when commenced, I should (as certainly would, I fear, be the case) be unable to finish it, I do entreat that you would continue to prosecute it. Your assurance to this effect would give me the greatest pleasure —pleasure is a bad term—let me rather say peace and consolation; for alas, my friend, I feel but too deeply how little I have been duly assiduous and faithful in employing the talents committed to my stewardship; and in forming a *partnership* of this sort with you, I cannot doubt that I should be doing an act highly pleasing to God, and beneficial to my fellow-creatures. Both my head and heart are quite full to overflowing, but I must conclude. My dear friend, may it please God to bless you, both in your public and private course.[1]

While Buxton was deliberating upon this summons to the "holy enterprise," Priscilla Gurney died. Just before her death she sent for Fowell Buxton to urge him to accept the proffered leadership. He has himself thus described the interview, which made a deep impression upon his sensitive mind.

Two or three days before Priscilla Gurney died she sent for me, as desiring to speak to me about something of importance. The moment she began to speak she was seized with a convulsion of coughing, which continued for a long time, racking

[1] *Memoirs of Buxton*, edited by his son (Phila., 1849), p. 112.

her feeble frame. She still seemed determined to persevere, but at length, finding all strength exhausted, she pressed my hand and said, "The poor, dear slaves!" I could not but understand her meaning, for during her illness she had repeatedly urged me to make their cause and condition the first object of my life, feeling nothing so heavy on her heart as their sufferings.[1]

Buxton accepted the summons. By untiring labour he fortified himself with a vast array of facts concerning the effects of slavery, and until the battle was finally won he worked unceasingly for the cause. London Yearly Meeting, its Meeting for Sufferings, many of its devoted individual members, and the Anti-slavery Society which contained a large proportion of Friends, all joined with concentrated energy, through public meetings and petitions and extensive educational campaigns, for the final act.

The part which Joseph Sturge took in the moral campaign against slavery is so signal that he must be singled out of the Quaker group of workers for special consideration. He was born at Elberton in Gloucestershire in 1793. He owed his first religious awakening to the preaching of William Forster, for whom he always cherished love and reverence. As he developed into manhood and became occupied in an extensive commercial business, he showed an ever-increasing depth of spiritual experience, sensitiveness of soul, and tenderness of conscience.[2]

In 1822 he settled in Birmingham and entered upon his remarkable career of public service to the city of his adoption. This period of removal to Birmingham marks the beginning of his intense anti-slavery interest. It was in 1823 that London Yearly Meeting sent a memorable petition presented to the House of Commons by Wilberforce, which opened in England the struggle for the complete abolition of slavery in the British dominions. In this early work of awakening the Society, James Cropper of Liverpool, father-in-law of Sturge, was the distinctive leader. He had carefully studied the facts

[1] *Memoirs of Buxton*, edited by his son (Phila., 1849), p. 112.

[2] Henry Richard's *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge* (London, 1864), pp. 22, 23. See also Stephen Hobhouse's *Joseph Sturge, his Life and Works* (London, 1919).

and problems of West Indian slavery; he was an able speaker and a noble character. Joseph Sturge came at once to his help and steadily rose to the place of leadership within the Society. There was a general desire at this time to work out some plan of gradual emancipation and to solve the problem in some way which would not disturb property interests. Even Buxton took a conservative course. Joseph Sturge, however, was for total and immediate emancipation, and he always refused to be entangled in any schemes of compromise. It was for him a question of moral principle, not one of political expediency. In 1830 he delivered in London Yearly Meeting a carefully prepared and earnest address, urging "the immediate extinction of this heavy national crime."[1] This address contained the best available expression of Joseph Sturge's central principle of action. He said:

When the Christian is convinced that the principle upon which he acts is correct, I believe it does not become him to examine too closely his probability of success, but rather to act in the assurance that, if he faithfully does his part, as much success will attend his efforts as is consistent with the will of that Divine Leader under whose banner he is enlisted.

That same year the Meeting for Sufferings, by direction of the Yearly Meeting, sent a petition to the House of Commons, asking that the extreme step in anti-slavery legislation should now be taken.

To the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The petition of the undersigned, representing the Society of Friends in the United Kingdom, respectfully sheweth—

That the said Society have long considered the holding of man as property by his fellow-man to be utterly repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and a direct violation of the unalienable rights of every human being, conferred upon him by the Almighty Parent of the universe.

That under a full conviction of the iniquity of the system of slavery, now existing in the British Colonies, and under a feeling of deep regret and sorrow in reflecting upon its protracted

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 86.

continuance, the said Society did at their last annual assembly direct your petitioners to embrace the earliest opportunity to intercede with Parliament, in their name and on their behalf, for its immediate and total abolition. In doing this, we would respectfully state that the Society of Friends have for fifty years pleaded with the Legislature, on behalf of their oppressed fellow-subjects of the African race; and that we now feel constrained again to urge upon the attention of Parliament the claims of this much injured portion of the human family; remembering that they are objects equally with ourselves of that redemption which comes by the Lord Jesus; and regarding them as British subjects, alike entitled to the protection of the laws, in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property, as secured to us by our excellent Constitution; but who, to the disgrace of the Christian profession, are still held in cruel bondage in the dependencies of this highly favoured land.

Nor is it for the benefit of the Slave alone that we desire to see Slavery abolished: we are, under the feeling of Christian love, deeply anxious for the removal of those multiplied evils, which in a moral and religious point of view injure and degrade the character *of all immediately concerned in upholding this dreadful system.*

When, in the year 1807, the abolition of the Slave-trade was decreed, your Petitioners were cheered with the hope that that great measure would immediately tend to ameliorate the character of slavery in the British Colonies, and lead at no distant period to its extinction. They have, however, been painfully disappointed; a grievous, although but too natural adherence to unwarrantable power on the part of the slave-holder, joined to a miscalculating love of gain, interposed and destroyed their cherished hopes.

Your Petitioners therefore, in 1823, felt it to be a duty again to intercede for the hastening of that day when British Colonial Slavery should finally cease. The resolutions unanimously adopted by both Houses of Parliament, at that period, gladdened the hearts of the friends of humanity, and afforded just ground of hope in favour of this righteous cause. Year after year has since passed over; but, we grieve to say, with but little evidence of substantial benefit from measures founded on those well intended resolutions. The system remains essentially the same: its evils have been of late strikingly developed; and its enormities pourtrayed in official documents laid before Parliament, as well as through other channels. These evils are indeed proved to be inseparable from the system; so as to render mitigation hopeless, and loudly to call for total abolition. Under

these considerations, your Petitioners would represent in the feeling of Christian love and respect for their rulers, that an increased and awful responsibility rests upon those *who have it in their power to abolish British Colonial Slavery.*

We do therefore, under a deep sense of religious duty, respectfully but most earnestly implore the Legislature, forthwith to pass a law for the immediate and total abolition of Slavery within the British dominions; and we trust that in performing this great act of national justice, the blessing of Him, who hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth, will rest upon the British Legislature; and that they will be enabled, in carrying this measure into effect, to exercise that wisdom and justice which the circumstances of the case demand.[1]

This petition was presented to the House by T. Fowell Buxton.

For the next two years the country was absorbed in the struggle for political Reform, and emancipation had to wait until the Reform Bill had passed. During this Reform-wave interval Friends were not resting. They were gathering their forces for the supreme effort. Joseph John Gurney wrote the impressive address which was adopted at a great meeting in Exeter Hall the 19th of April 1833, and the meeting marched in a body to Downing Street, where Samuel Gurney read the address to the Prime Minister. The address contained these words:

> We feel bound publicly and emphatically to declare, that while slavery obtains under any form, however modified or however sanctioned, we will never relax from our efforts, nor swerve from our purpose to exert that influence which we may collectively or individually possess, to effect by all legitimate means *its immediate and entire abolition.*[2]

Joseph Sturge was, during this critical year, working early and late in England, Ireland and Scotland to arouse the nation to the issue. When the Government, forced to action by the popular voice "to which no minister can be deaf," drafted its plan of emancipation, it was discovered to be far from satisfactory to those

[1] *The Yorkshireman*, vol. v. pp. 281, 282.
[2] *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 103.

Friends who had stood solidly for principle, instead of expediency. It involved a system of apprenticeship which would continue the period of virtual slavery for seven years [1] more, and it provided for a gift of £20,000,000 to the owners of the slaves. Joseph Sturge and many other Friends stood out strenuously against these compromising provisions, and the former endeavoured earnestly to induce Fowell Buxton to insist upon the elimination of these two objectionable clauses. Buxton was not willing to risk the danger of defeating the Bill altogether, as might happen if these changes were insisted on, and he contented himself with the introduction of a slight amendment, though he afterwards acknowledged that the two provisions, to which Joseph Sturge objected, were a grave mistake in the Bill. Buxton's service to the cause, notwithstanding this and some other disagreements with the radical Friends, was very great. His whole heart and soul went into the anti-slavery work, and as the last stages of the fight were reached he gave Herculean labours to the cause in Parliament.

> The depth and intensity of his feelings were visible in all his deportment; he looked pale and careworn, and his tall figure began to show signs of stooping. He spoke little and was continually engrossed in thought.[2]

The goal was at length reached in the summer of 1833, shortly after the death of the great champion of freedom, Wilberforce.

The Bill liberating every slave in the British dominions after August 1835 passed both Houses, and received the royal assent the 28th of August 1833. This Act freed between 700,000 and 800,000 slaves in British colonies. London Yearly Meeting, in May 1834, "reverently" records "its gratitude to Almighty God for disposing our Legislature to this great act of justice and mercy." Friends in Great Britain had not only petitioned, "in season and out of season," for this event, they had not only contributed a large share of the anti-slavery literature,

[1] The period was originally twelve years.
[2] *The Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. ii. p. 64.

and done much of the work of public agitation, but they had supplied a great proportion of the money for this intense campaign. Friends gave £8942 for this cause during the period between 1815 and 1833, which was augmented by £1504 of accrued interest.[1]

It very soon appeared that Joseph Sturge's fears regarding the provision in the Emancipation Act for a term of apprenticeship for the manumitted slaves were fully justified. It proved to be a subtle scheme for continuing the worst features of slavery and a way of defeating the fundamental purpose of the reformers. Joseph Sturge, who was now the master spirit of the movement, began at once to study the condition of the apprenticed slaves and to watch the course of events in the West Indies. He saw very early that not much relief could be expected from Parliament, and that the only course was an appeal to the nation. He realized that for such a campaign he needed to have vivid, first-hand knowledge of facts. To equip himself, therefore, he undertook in 1836 and 1837 an extensive tour, in company with Thomas Harvey, through the West Indies. The journey was beset with grave risks and personal dangers, but it was carried through with the fidelity, thoroughness, and insight which characterized all Joseph Sturge's work. He wrote a careful statement of his discoveries and conclusions, which was published under the title *The West Indies in 1837* (London, 1838). Armed with an array of conclusive facts he took the leadership in the task of educating public sentiment in Parliament and throughout the country. So impressive was his presentation of the West Indian situation that he at once won Lord Brougham to the cause in the House of Lords. Another powerful advocate was found in the famous Irish orator, Daniel O'Connell, who pleaded the case in the House of Commons. In a public meeting of unusual weight and enthusiasm in Exeter Hall a resolution was taken, by a large group of men of marked distinction, that they would never stop the agitation "until every

[1] *The Yorkshireman*, vol. v. p. 288.

form and vestige of slavery was swept from the face of the British dominions." Beaten in Parliament in two endeavours, Joseph Sturge turned once more with faith and courage to the people. A Town Meeting was called in Birmingham, and a resolution was adopted to the effect that "negro apprenticeship in the British colonies should *immediately cease*." A great delegation repaired to London, and a new Bill for the abolition of apprenticeship —the third during that single session—was introduced. Meantime the colonies themselves had discovered that the determined opposition to apprenticeship could not long be stemmed, and of their own accord the colonies of Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, the Virgin Islands, and Jamaica passed Acts declaring all slaves free and all apprenticeship at an end after August 1838, which Acts Parliament ratified, and the victory of the long struggle was complete. This ratification Act contained these memorable words:

> From the first day of August 1838, all and every the persons hitherto held in slavery within any British colony shall be to all intents and purposes free and discharged of and from every manner of slavery and shall be absolutely and forever manumitted and the children to be born of such persons, and the offspring of such children shall in like manner be free from their birth; and from and after the first of August, slavery shall be and is hereby utterly and forever abolished throughout the British colonies, plantations, and possessions.[1]

Many noble workers helped to achieve this signal triumph of moral endeavour, but all his contemporaries, inside and outside the Society of Friends, united in the judgment that to Joseph Sturge more than to any other single man this final moral victory was due.

## II

We must now turn back and consider some of the other humanitarian movements of which members of the Society of Friends had become champions in these

[1] *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, p. 174.

eventful years of the anti-slavery struggle. The profound interest and sympathy which were awakened in the hearts of Friends for the black people, dragged from their native homes to be transported as slaves, expanded and widened out and finally touched all forms of distress and suffering caused by man's inhumanity to man. The old spiritual law was verified that the more one bestows of mercy and sympathy and love the more one has to bestow, for these interior riches increase and multiply as they are lavishly spent!

William Allen, "the Spitalfields genius," was one of the most remarkable examples of the expanding power of human goodness in the annals of Quaker history. The story of his life is refreshing, not only as a fine illustration of the new birth of Quaker philanthropy, but also as a revelation of the way any good man can lend his talents out for the service of his fellows. He was born in Spitalfields, London, in 1770. He was "tender-minded" as a child, and grew in grace as he increased in years, apparently without any great epoch-making religious crisis in his life. The messages of itinerant Ministers searched his deeps and sent him along a spiritual track which seemed to fit the bent of his disposition. He notes, among other visits in his youth, that of Rebecca Jones of Philadelphia, who counselled him well and wisely, and reminded him that if he kept to the Truth, the Truth would keep to him. The diary of his early years contains such aspirations as this:

> O for a continuance of that sweetness which I at times feel a taste of, raising my affections towards that which is good.[1]

Entries in the diary revealing a consciousness of little sins highly magnified, after the usual manner of that time, are frequently in evidence, such as the following:

> Suffered the enemy to gain a great advantage over me to-day. O the beauty of forbearance! Think of it, and remember the precept of the Apostle, not to render railing for railing.

[1] *Life of William Allen*, in two vols. (Philadelphia, 1847), vol. i. p. 3.

And again:

> Indulged the flesh too much this morning by lying in bed till eight o'clock. Oh, my lightness and chaffiness! Lord, strengthen me to oppose it, for, of myself, I can do nothing.[1]

The desire to see the overthrow of slavery and to assist in relieving the burdens of the slaves rose to a passion in his youthful breast. An item in his diary when he was eighteen years old brings clearly to light both his intense sympathy and his readiness to be obedient to his vision, whatever the cost. He says:

> When I reflect upon the tyranny and oppression exercised by my countrymen towards the poor Africans, and the many thousands yearly murdered in the disgraceful Slave Trade, I can but be a zealous opposer of slavery; and, indeed, I have been so for a long time, as far as lay in my power—yet one step farther may be taken by me, which is wanting to complete my testimony in this respect, and which, if universally adopted, would inevitably put a stop to this enormous evil, and that is, disusing those commodities procured by the labour of slaves. And as sugar is, undoubtedly, one of the chief, I resolve, through divine assistance, to persevere in the disuse of it until the Slave Trade shall be abolished.[2]

It was to be forty-three years before he was ever again to taste sugar. This high resolution was to be put to its severest test when a great emperor would one day offer him a cup of tea with sugar in it. But on the day when slavery was abolished he quietly resumed the use of sugar.[3]

He was stirred to a great pitch of enthusiasm when Wilberforce introduced his motion in Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade, and during the great debate of 1791 he was an enthralled listener, though he could not be present when the final vote was taken. In the early morning, after the vote of the night before, he hurried to the home of his friend Thomas Crossley to learn the result. "My heart palpitated," he says, "and I was almost afraid to knock at the door." "Ah,

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 4. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p 5.
[3] See *The Spitalfields Genius*, by J. Fayle (London, 1884), p. 26.

William, we are beat!" his friend cried; "beat all to pieces—almost two to one against us." This unexpected intelligence positively made the young man ill for the moment, but in the evening he gets Woodfall's "Register," and enters the substance of the debate in his diary, concluding: "Noes, 163; ayes, 88; majority 75. Oh, scandalous division! Oh, most disgraceful vote."[1]

It was shortly after this experience that William Allen became intimate with Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce, and with the band of anti-slavery Quakers, and formed bonds of great friendship which lasted throughout his life.

In 1792 William Allen entered the chemical and pharmaceutical business, in the already famous establishment at Plough Court, at the head of which was the devout Quaker, Joseph Gurney Bevan, who, as William Allen says, "exercised a vast influence in the councils of the Society of Friends."[2] Twenty-two years old when he entered this firm, William Allen now set to work to make himself an all-round scientist. He studied chemistry; he studied medicine; he perfected himself in pharmacy; he worked effectively at physics, geology, astronomy; he learned Latin, French, German, and gathered a reading knowledge of Greek and Russian.[3] He became an intimate friend of Sir Humphry Davy, Sir Ashley Cooper, John Dalton, Dr. Babington, Count Rumford, and many other prominent European scientists of his time. He became one of the founders of the "Askesian Society" and a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1802 he became lecturer on chemistry at Guy's Hospital, where he continued to lecture until 1826. These lectures were so successful that Sir Humphry Davy invited him to give courses also at the Royal Institution. In the press and tension of his business life, and with all his immense

[1] *The Spitalfields Genius*, by J. Fayle (London, 1884), pp. 25, 26; *Life*, vol. i. pp. 9-15.

[2] J. G. Bevan retired in 1794, when the firm-name became "Mildred & Allen." Mildred retired in 1797 and William Allen was joined by the distinguished Quaker, Luke Howard.

[3] In 1800 he makes this entry in his diary: "A grand object with me is to perfect myself in the study of medicine, also in Latin" (*Life*, vol. i. p. 35).

humanitarian efforts and his religious ministry, he continued to carry on extensive courses of scientific lectures and to advance scientific discovery through experiments.

His diary is an amazing revelation of diligence and of multiform interests. It shows a charming spirit of humility and an unspoiled simplicity of soul. His overmastering aspiration is always the perfection of his life for the sake of others. Entries like the following are frequent:

> Dear Lord! I do love Thee. O, that Thou would'st draw me nearer to Thyself, that in time and in eternity I may be sweetly Thine! In vespers I am sometimes engaged to supplicate, that I may be made an instrument in the divine hand, to bring others nearer to the Source of goodness and love.[1]

It is, too, a constant concern of his mind that his scientific pursuits shall not interfere with his spiritual development. He allows nothing to interrupt his attendance at mid-week meetings for worship or the meetings for the transaction of Quaker affairs. He makes this interesting note in his diary in 1803:

> Made temporals give way to spirituals, in putting off my lecture this morning on account of Quarterly Meeting, and was glad I did, having a favoured time and a stronger feeling of divine good than for a long season.[2]

Soon after his election to the Royal Society he makes this comment:

> Very low and poor this week—but little feeling of good. May not the cause be a too great absorption of the mind in outward things? I have, perhaps, been too anxious about our experiment and paper for the Royal Society.[3]

In 1812 he became deeply distressed over the sufferings of the poor in Spitalfields. He visited the homes and inspected the condition of the destitute labourers in this section of London and called together a group of about forty persons in his home to formulate plans for relief. A society was formed to investigate conditions and causes of distress, to raise funds for immediate relief, to manage

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 40. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 47. [3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 67.

centres for the distribution of soup, and to work out methods for the permanent improvement of distressed families. Here are two items in his diary which give an insight into the daily life of this busy man during this period of industrial depression.

I have lately been much engaged in the affairs of the Society for the relief of the labouring and manufacturing poor. All the letters from different parts of the country are put into my hands, in order to digest the information, which is afterwards fairly entered under the different heads, in a book kept for that purpose. The whole forms a most valuable body of information relative to the state of the poor. . . .

Most of my time is taken up with societies for the relief of the distressed poor, engaged also about an arbitration, the African Institution Committee, etc., etc. The times are very awful, the wheels of government can hardly go on, great fears of a war with America. On occasions of public calamity, Friends' post must be the care of the poor and the relief of distress. Though I feel at times uneasy at being obliged to neglect my own private concerns, yet I am not without a comfortable degree of evidence that I am in the way of my duty.[1]

It was a little before this period—in 1811—that William Allen started the quarterly journal, *The Philanthropist*, which was destined to have a distinguished career. James Mill and other famous economists and philanthropists contributed to its columns, and it became a potent instrument for the improvement of society.[2] In 1814 he joined in a still more ambitious philanthropic undertaking for the improvement of industrial conditions. He formed a partnership with John Walker, Joseph Fox, Joseph Foster, Michael Gibbs, and Robert Owen, and bought the cotton mills at New Lanark on the Clyde. This momentous venture was made for the purpose of working out a vast scheme of social improvement of the conditions of factory labourers, which had already in a limited way been put

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 109, 110. He proposed to his friend Richard Reynolds the interesting project of a penny savings bank. The letter is as follows: "Hast thou turned thy attention to the subject of a Bank for the Poor, in which their little savings of three-pence or six-pence per week, might accumulate for their benefit? I have consulted Morgan, the great calculator, and he is to sketch me a plan. I am anxious to connect something of this kind with our exertions for the poor in Spitalfields" (*Life*, vol. i. p. 120).

[2] See Bain, *The Life of James Mill* (1882), pp. 82 *seq.*

into operation by Robert Owen. To this social venture William Allen gave a large amount of time and thought. The main points of the scheme that was now worked out under the new partners were the following:

To make the work-people as comfortable as possible in their temporal concerns, by economic and judicious arrangements.

To remove, as far as possible, from them temptations to vice and immorality.

To provide a savings bank for their relief in sickness and support in old age.

To provide education for the whole of their children, and to form in them habits of morality and virtue.

To encourage all in following that system of religion which their consciences approve.[1]

The experiment was highly successful in its central aims. William Allen was always more or less unhappy over the partnership, because he was seriously oppressed in mind by Robert Owen's attitude toward religion, and he felt himself compromised by such intimate fellowship and co-operation with a man whose religious views were at the sharpest variance with his own.[2]

It was, however, a great joy to the good man, on the occasion of his visit to New Lanark mills, with the other partners, in 1818, to receive the following address from the contented and comfortable employees:

We, the inhabitants of New Lanark, beg to address ourselves to you, as part proprietors of the establishment, on your appearance amongst us. We have had several opportunities of expressing to Robert Owen, Esq., our grateful sense of his

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 184.

[2] Robert Owen (1771–1858) was a Welshman by birth, a successful workman and inventor in the cotton industry at Manchester, and later a wealthy cotton manufacturer on the Clyde at New Lanark. He had a passion for the betterment of human conditions. He was an enthusiastic forerunner of the modern social reformers. He saw more clearly than his contemporaries did the evils of the old economic system, and he was eager for the application of methods that would revolutionize society as he knew it. While possessing a large measure of Christian spirit, he was an avowed opponent of organized Christianity as he knew it in the Churches. His reputation for "infidelity" and for "wild social theories" gave his name a very bad odour, and one can see in Allen's *Life* how sensitively he felt himself "compromised" by his association with Owen. See an interesting article on Robert Owen by Dr. Thomas Hodgkin in *F.Q.E.* vol. xlvi. (1912) p. 157. For the influence of John Bellers on Robert Owen see *Second Period*, pp. 586, 587.

continued kindness to us, as our more immediate master; and would now offer you our most cordial welcome, on visiting this place. We are fully aware, Gentlemen, that although your other pursuits may prevent your continued residence in the village, yet, whatever tends to add to our comfort, or render our circumstances easier, will meet with your approbation; and, in this view, we regard it as not unnecessary to thank you, thus publicly, for the many advantages we enjoy, through your co-operation with Mr. Owen, and the other partners in the concern. The care which is taken in gratuitously educating our children, and the humane treatment we experience, under the persons to whom is committed the management of the various departments of this work, are advantages which call forth our earnest expressions of gratitude. We are sensible that our circumstances are much superior to those of all other cotton-spinners; and it is our desire, by a steady attention to our various duties, to merit a continuance of that kindness, which we now experience. We hope the interest you have taken (in conjunction with the other proprietors) in the Bill now pending in Parliament—having for its object to place others of the labouring class, in some degree, on a footing with ourselves—will be rewarded, by your seeing it pass into a law. We conclude, by expressing our desire, that all cotton-spinners enjoyed the same advantages as we do; then would the master manufacturers feel the superior gratification, arising from possessing the affections of a well-treated and happy people; and their servants, that pleasure which a continued kind attention on the part of the master is calculated to afford.

With much respect, Gentlemen, we sign ourselves in the name, and by the request of the inhabitants of New Lanark.[1]

To this address William Allen gave a very interesting response for the owners, and he took this occasion to set forth the underlying moral and religious principles that controlled and guided this great social experiment.[2]

While this venture was going forward William Allen was working unremittingly for more humane criminal procedure and for the abolition of capital punishment, which was still inflicted in England for many minor crimes. The appalling methods of dealing with those who were feeble-minded, or who had made a blundering misdeed in a moment of dire distress or sudden temptation, lay

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 258, 259.

[2] This "Reply" is printed in the *Life*, vol. i. pp. 259-264. William Allen withdrew from the partnership in 1835.

heavily on his soul. He has given us one instance that may stand for many.

Let us now see the kind of subject which the judge has selected for his terrible example: A young man about twenty-two years of age, extremely ignorant, not being able to read or write, and exhibiting no indications of a ferocious disposition; this poor wretch, it seems, crept in at the window of a house, stole property to the amount of a few shillings, and withdrew without any attempt to commit a personal injury.

The crime is doubtless one of considerable magnitude, and should be visited with adequate punishment; but the punishment assigned to it, in this case, is so shockingly disproportionate, that the mind recoils from the consideration of it with horror. Shall a person, to whom, be it remembered, society has failed in its duty by suffering him to grow up in ignorance, for the crime of stealing to the amount of a few shillings, and without any aggravating circumstances, be cut off in the prime of life, suffer the very same punishment which you inflict upon him who has been guilty of the most barbarous murder, and, in short, endure the greatest punishment which one human being can inflict upon another.

The laws, as they now stand, from their sanguinary nature, fail in protecting a large portion of the community. Many will not prosecute when plundered of their property, lest the felon, if convicted, should lose his life; hence for want of a law inflicting *adequate* punishment, an offender escapes to commit new depredations, and derives farther encouragement by calculating upon his chances. Every thing seems planned to *avenge* society of its injuries, while the means for preventing their increase are almost completely overlooked. To reform the guilty, and to restore them as useful members of the community, is a glorious triumph of humanity, and marks a state rising in the scale of civilisation; but to have no other resource than the punishment of death, reminds me of the miserable subterfuge of a barbarous age, barren in expedients to save, strong only to destroy.[1]

He worked at this problem with other broad-minded philanthropists, and he lived to see the old barbaric system abolished and a more humane one inaugurated.

One of the greatest events of William Allen's eventful life was his continental journey with Stephen Grellet. The visit was primarily a religious one, but it furnished

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 129.

an extraordinary opportunity for Allen to bring his philanthropic plans before the most influential men in Europe. The Emperor Alexander of Russia had already in 1814 become intimately acquainted with William Allen and had gone with him to a Quaker meeting in London. This was the beginning of a very remarkable friendship and of a spiritual influence that became a powerful factor in the life of the Emperor. The two Quakers—Grellet and Allen—had much in common and were admirably suited to travel in religious ministry together. They seem to have had this extensive visit "opened" to themselves each in turn, and William was inwardly all ready for the "call" when Stephen laid it before him.[1] Wherever they went, William Allen found opportunity to set in movement intelligent plans for improving prisons, insane asylums, the conditions of labourers, the care of the poor, and for the education of the youth, especially in religion. As he eventually came to have a very great influence over Alexander and upon his large and liberal plans for reform in Russia, I shall give the reader the benefit of extracts from his personal account of interviews with the Emperor:

We were shown in at the Emperor's private door, and conducted to the private stair-case. Here was not the least pomp; not a single soldier on the stairs, and the servants had no sword, nor any livery or uniform. The Emperor was in a small apartment, with a sofa in it, a table and chairs,—the whole very neat and plain. He was dressed in a blue uniform, with gold epaulets; he received us very kindly, and we were soon sensible of a renewal of those feelings which we had experienced when with him before. I believe he was quite glad to see us. After we had conversed a short time, standing, he invited us to sit down. I

[1] The following passage in Allen's *Life* is of special interest: "A Special Meeting for Sufferings, in which dear S. Grellet presented his certificates and opened his concern in a very weighty manner. After many Friends had spoken, and the clerk had formed a minute, I stood up and informed Friends that I had for a long time gradually felt a concern coming upon me to join our dear Friend in a part, at least, of his prospects, and that it was now settled upon my mind as a matter of duty. A solemn pause ensued, after which several Friends expressed their unity and sympathy, and a minute was made accordingly. I thought that there was something of the presence of the Lord to be comfortably felt. Surely my prayer has been answered by the degree of light and clearness which has been mercifully vouchsafed" (vol. i. p. 268).

sat on the sofa, the Emperor was on a chair just opposite to me, and Stephen by him; no one was present but ourselves. He conversed with us in the openness of friendship, inquired respecting what we had seen since our arrival, etc., and seemed to retain a lively impression of our interview in London, and of the meeting for worship, which he attended when Count Lieven took me off so unexpectedly to show them the way. We had a most satisfactory opportunity together, in which we were renewedly convinced that the Emperor was favoured with clear views respecting the only sure foundation, and that he was sensible of something of that divine fellowship which the sincere in heart are often permitted to experience. He loves vital religion. With regard to the works on which Daniel Wheeler is employed, he told us that it was not alone for the sake of having his land drained and cultivated, that he formed that establishment, but in order to bring over some persons of our principles to settle there. We told him of our further prospects, and he said we should be pleased with some of the people in the South, but he expressed a tender concern and sympathy for us, on hearing that we thought we might go to Constantinople. On dear Stephen telling him of the way in which he had been led in this journey, and that although in other countries he had felt it his duty to have public meetings, at some of which a large number of persons were present, yet now he felt that the service lay more in conversation and private religious intercourse with individuals, the Emperor beautifully remarked, that if we attended to the impulse of the Holy Spirit, He would keep us out of everything which might be improper or hurtful in its consequences, and would support us in the performance of our duty, whatever that might be. . . .

He inquired of us about prisons, and we could but express our sentiments, fully, upon the present system here, and in our own country. When I began to speak upon this subject, he leaned over to me and looked at me with fixed attention. I said that the general state of prisons was too much alike in all countries; that mankind had, for ages, been going on upon a system, which seemed to have vengeance for its object, rather than reform—they went upon the principle of retaliation. Society had suffered an injury from the criminal, and therefore it seemed to be thought right to make the criminal suffer, and that, by taking signal vengeance on him, others might be deterred. Now, as it was pretty generally acknowledged, that this plan had universally failed, it was high time to try another, more consonant with the spirit of the Christian religion, more rational, and better adapted to human nature. We then described Eliz. Fry's exer-

tions at Newgate, and the success which appeared to have attended them; we adverted to what Walter Venning had been doing upon that subject here, but forbore to press any thing, as the Emperor already had the statement; the matter seemed to be near his heart. I expressed my firm conviction that what the Emperor did in his dominions, would react powerfully upon England, and facilitate that reform in our prisons, which the friends of humanity were so anxious to promote. . . .

After some farther conversation, the Emperor desired we might have a little pause for mental retirement and inward prayer, and we had a short but solemn time of silence. Dear Stephen, at length, kneeled down, and was sweetly engaged in supplication; the Emperor also knelt, and I thought divine goodness was near us. Soon after this we took our leave, and he shook hands with us most affectionately. As we were retiring, he turned to me and particularly requested that, in the course of our journey, I would send him, freely, any remarks that might occur upon what we saw, which I promised to do. We were, in the whole, about two hours with him, and left him at eight o'clock. . . .

We returned to our lodgings, deeply thankful for the inward support we had felt upon this interesting occasion, and for the evidence that the mind of the Emperor continued to be under the same precious religious feelings as formerly; but he occupies an arduous post, and is surrounded with many difficulties—may he still be graciously preserved![1]

At a later visit William Allen gave the Emperor an account of the experiment in the mills at New Lanark and endeavoured to supply him with definite information for the improvement of labour conditions in his vast empire. This second visit closed with this interesting scene:

By this time it was getting near ten o'clock, when the Emperor said that he wished us to sit a little in silence as before, for the Great Master had promised to be with the two and the three. He observed that, even when we were separated, we might feel one another near in a spiritual union—that space related only to what was corporeal, not to spirits. This was a solemn moment, the evidence of the divine over-shadowing was clear, strong and indisputable, and the Emperor, I was sure, felt it to be so; it was like sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. After some time, Stephen spoke most acceptably, and the Emperor, I doubt not, will long remember his communication.

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 350-352.

I needed no other evidence than my own feelings to be assured that he was much affected. I believed it right for me to offer up a supplication, but so awful did it appear that I had great difficulty in giving way; at last, however, I rose, turned round, and knelt down; the Emperor came to the sofa and knelt down by me, and now strength was given me beyond what I had ever felt before, and the precious power accompanied the words. When it was finished I paused a little, and then rose; he rose soon afterwards, and we sat a few minutes in silence, we then prepared to take leave; the Emperor was much affected and held us by the hand,—it was a solemn parting; he raised my hand to his lips and kissed it. I was now anxious to be gone, and moved towards the door, and after taking leave of Stephen, the Emperor went hastily into another room. We returned to our lodging with hearts full of divine peace; we both agreed that this one interview was worth all that we had suffered in coming here, and all the sacrifices we have made. It is marvellous to us how, from time to time, upon all important occasions, we are favoured with wisdom and strength by our Great Master, just sufficient for the trial, though at other times we are often greatly depressed; the work is His, and the praise is *His alone*.[1]

Seven times he visited the continent of Europe in obedience to an inner call for service. Sometimes the main concern was religious, sometimes it was philanthropic, but with him the two features of life fused together into one undivided purpose to make his life express *love*.

William Allen, who was associated with the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria, in the financial reorganization of the Lancasterian Schools,[2] was recognized by the Duke as a man of unusual financial ability and was called upon for counsel and advice in the difficult task of straightening out the latter's tangled business affairs. William Allen, with his usual direct and sensible methods, devised a simple practical scheme of limiting the Duke's expenses and of applying the balance of his allowance to paying off his debts. So much was this wise assistance appreciated that William Allen was appointed administrator of the estate of the Duke of Kent and, what was more important, he won the deep gratitude and favour of Queen Victoria.

[1] *Life*, vol. i. pp. 363, 364.

[2] An account of these schools will be given in a later chapter.

William Allen's later life focussed upon the creation of an "agricultural colony" with industrial schools at Lindfield in Sussex, which was begun in 1821. This was a very dear project with him, and much of his precious time was spent living among the people at Lindfield, and working out the details of housing and of gardens for his colony, and in creating schools in which the children were to be trained for their occupations. This absorption in one central reform did not, however, prevent him from carrying on other far-reaching plans for human relief and betterment. He won the friendship and confidence of the Duke of Wellington, and through him and other prominent statesmen he was enabled to work more successfully than would have been otherwise possible for reforms both at home and abroad.[1]

Peter Bedford's labours for humanity are closely intertwined with those of William Allen. They lived for many years near neighbours in Spitalfields, and they were associated in numerous movements undertaken for the removal of sin and suffering. Peter Bedford (1780–1864), like all the members of the Quaker group of humanitarian workers, was an intensely evangelical Christian. Having once as a boy done something which seemed to him very wicked and worthy of punishment in hell, he deliberately put his hand on the hot coals of the fire in the grate in order to get a vivid sense of "the anticipated awfulness" of the award of sin! This was only the act of a child, but the stern realities of sin, and the sure consequences that attach to sin, remained throughout his life as vivid as in the young mind of the boy. Religion was the alpha and omega of this good man's life. He began every day of it with a period of Scripture reading and devout meditation and prayer, while all his activities of help and relief were inspired by his overwhelming sense of Christ's unutterable love and sacrifice for him, a poor needy sinner. Peter Bedford's name is especially associated with his tender sympathy

[1] William Allen's death occurred December 30, 1843. I shall refer elsewhere to his large contribution to education.

for juvenile criminals and his remarkable success in reforming them. The unlighted streets, the lack of any competent police force, the brutalizing sports of the day, and the absence of secular or religious training for poor children produced in crowded districts an appalling amount of juvenile crime, and the horror of the situation was greatly augmented by the barbaric administration of "justice" which prevailed. Little children between eight and twelve years of age were often hung for petty offences. Those who escaped the gallows were herded like animals in the vile prisons of the day, while the criminal trials were rushed through with bewildering speed, and with little or no opportunity for the discovery of the offender's pitiable condition. Peter Bedford set himself to the task of improving these unhappy little lives and of changing the conditions which produced such lives. He worked in conjunction with benevolent men and women of various religious denominations, a large number of whom were of his own Society. He possessed an engaging personality which disarmed fear and begot confidence. Hardened thieves confided in him, trusted him and revealed their inmost lives to him. He was safe anywhere in daylight or in dark, for all the criminals in his wide circuit knew him and respected him. When they were in trouble they had a friend in him. He found his way to the most hideous prisons, and he sat with many a condemned person in the awful hour before execution. But his most important service was not as friend and helper to the persons who had gone astray, great as this was, it was rather his valiant effort to change conditions, through the work of the Society for Investigating the Causes of the alarming Increase of Juvenile Delinquency. His humanitarian efforts took three special lines: (1) the relief of distress through the famous Spitalfields Soup Association, and the Association for the Relief of Distress among the Industrious Poor; (2) the organization of plans of education and training for the poor children of Spitalfields; and (3) the organization of well-defined efforts to ameliorate the criminal code,

especially to secure the abolition of capital punishment for minor offences. In all these movements, which went forward with astonishing strides, Peter Bedford was associated with men and women of distinction and of magnanimous aims, and no achievement of social betterment can be attributed solely to him, but he was during this important constructive period of humanitarian effort a shining figure and a notable light-bearer.[1]

William Allen's lifelong friend, William Forster (1784–1854), was a pure-minded man with one central purpose in his life—to make his soul "a stainless mirror" for his God. In 1816 he married Anna Buxton, a beautiful, dedicated woman, sister of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, so that William Forster was brought into the inner circle of the Gurney-Buxton-Fry group, while he was, too, intimately associated with William Allen. In 1812 he joined with Peter Bedford and his associates to work for the relief of the distressed and poverty-stricken mill-labourers in the Spitalfields district of London. Here he came into close contact with the most distressing forms of suffering and of sin. In company with other devoted workers, among whom Stephen Grellet was often found, he gathered together the thieves and prostitutes of this section. The forgiving love of God and the possibility of new life and freedom in Christ were proclaimed to them in warm and tender messages. It was through this work with the criminal classes in Spitalfields that William Forster was first led to visit the jails and prisons of the city, and so made the discovery of the awful conditions in Newgate, which profoundly shocked his sensitive soul. A writer quoted in *The Gurneys of Earlham* has given us a picture of the women prisoners in their depraved surroundings:

At that time all the female prisoners in Newgate were confined in that part afterwards known as the untried side. The larger

[1] Peter Bedford's work has been well told in a brief biography by William Tallack—*Peter Bedford, the Spitalfields Philanthropist* (London, 1865; new edition, 1893). The Bedford Institute, which bears Peter Bedford's name, still carries on an important Quaker work in the Spitalfields district.

portion of the quadrangle was then used as a state prison. The partition wall was not of a sufficient height to prevent the state prisoners from overlooking the narrow yard and windows of the two wards and two cells of which the women's division consisted. These four rooms comprised about one hundred and ninety superficial yards, into which, at this time, nearly three hundred women with their numerous children were crowded,—tried and untried, misdemeanants and felons, without classification, without employment, and with no other superintendence than that given by a man and his son, who had charge of them by night and by day. In the same rooms, in rags and dirt, destitute of sufficient clothing, sleeping without bedding on the floor, the boards of which were in part raised to supply a sort of pillow, they lived, cooked and washed.

With the proceeds of their clamorous beggings when any stranger appeared amongst them, the prisoners purchased liquors from a regular tap in the prison; spirits were openly drunk, and the ears were assailed by terrible language. Beyond that necessary for their safe custody there was little restraint over their communication with the world without.[1]

During the winter of 1812–1813 Stephen Grellet, in his work of proclaiming the Saviour's forgiving mercy and redeeming love to seeming outcasts, paid a visit to Newgate prison. He was accompanied by Peter Bedford and William Forster. They gave their message to four condemned criminals who were awaiting execution, and they witnessed the parting scene when one of these doomed men took farewell leave of his wife and children. After these heart-rending experiences, the three Friends entered the women's ward of the prison, and, in spite of all their preparation for scenes of misery and degradation, they were unutterably shocked at what they saw and heard. In his distress over what he had found in the great London prison, William Forster went to Elizabeth Fry and laid his burden upon her. He described the wretched and abandoned women, herded together like cattle, and living in shame and misery, and the good woman "believed in his belief" that something might be done to better this darkest zone.[2]

[1] *Op. cit.* vol. i. p. 251.
[2] *Memoirs of William Forster*, vol. i. pp. 141, 142.

Before following her brave efforts to change the prisoners and the prison, we must turn first to see how this Quaker woman had been slowly prepared for her mission. Few, if any, more beautiful and charming women have graced the history of the Society of Friends than Elizabeth Fry (born Gurney), who also stands out as the most distinguished of all persons in its annals for humanitarian service. In her youth and also in her mature life she was marked with striking beauty of face and grace of manners, and she was endowed with rare gifts of mind and personality. In 1797 she made this entry in her Diary:

> I am now seventeen, and if some great and kind circumstance does not happen to me I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust.[1]

She revealed a certain sensitiveness and delicacy of nervous structure which might have led to disaster, but which under the right guidance and integration eventually gave her unusual personal power and influence.[2] She was the fourth child of John and Catherine (Bell) Gurney and was born in Norwich, May 21, 1780. In 1786 her father, who was a man of wealth for those times, leased the famous estate of Earlham, near Norwich, which was the home of the Gurney family during the years of Elizabeth's youth. The Quaker meeting in Goat's Lane did not impress her favourably; it seemed long and dreary, and the early diaries of Elizabeth and her sisters contain frequent entries like this: "Goat's was dis. to-day," "Goat's was long and dis.," which meant that the meeting in Goat's Lane was disgusting and dull. There were in all twelve children, eleven of whom lived to grow to mature age, seven daughters and four sons. The mother died when the youngest child was only about one year old, and the eldest, Catherine, then seventeen, became the guide of the family. Elizabeth was intensely fond of music and dancing, and as her father was

[1] *Memoirs* (London, 1847), vol. i. p. 36.

[2] Her nervous and pathological traits have been carefully studied by Dr. Henry M. Thomas in his brochure, *Elizabeth Fry—Quaker Reformer* (Baltimore, 1919).

indulgent and far from "strict" in the Quaker sense, she grew up with strong social interests and with a distinct worldly bent of mind. The daughters were all fond of gay clothes and were full of vivacity and active spirits. They enjoyed riding and such sports as the youth of the time indulged in. They all had strong literary and scientific interests, which brought them into close and intimate fellowship with young people of kindred tastes. They eagerly read Rousseau and Voltaire and other "free-thought" writers, so that they were carried into regions of thought and sentiment quite out of harmony with the Quaker faith of the period. "Goat's" ministered less and less to their intellectual appetites, and they found themselves drifting further and further from the settled faith of their ancestral religion. Precisely at the crisis and turning-point of her early life, William Savery of Philadelphia came to Norwich on a religious visit and "reached" her with his message. In fact the remarkable effect of his visit is one of the most luminous illustrations of the constructive power of the old itinerant ministry.

William Savery's own modest and restrained account of his visit to Norwich is very interesting and gives us a good glimpse of the conditions of Quakerism there at this period:

> Went in a post-chaise for Norwich, and reached a Friend's house about half a mile out of the town.
>
> Attended their meeting; some not members stepped in, and there were about two hundred under our name; very few middle-aged, or young persons, who had a consistent appearance in their dress; indeed, I thought it the gayest meeting of Friends I ever sat in, and was grieved to see it. I expected to pass the meeting in silent suffering, but at length believed it most for my peace to express a little, and through gracious condescension was favoured to relieve my mind, and many were tendered. Had a meeting in the evening, in a large meeting-house in another part of the town: there seems to be but few upright standard-bearers left among the members in this place, yet they are not entirely removed. Attended the public meeting, and the house, though very large, could not contain the people by several hundreds; but considering their crowded situation, many being obliged to stand, they soon became settled, and through mercy it proved

a remarkably open, satisfactory meeting, ending in prayer and praise to the Author of every blessing. The marks of wealth and grandeur are too obvious in several families of Friends in this place, which made me sorrowful, yet saw but little opening to relieve my mind; several of the younger branches, though they are enabled, through Divine grace, to see what the Truth leads to, yet it is uncertain whether, with all the alluring things of this world around them, they will choose the simple, safe path of self denial.[1]

This visit and the good man's message worked almost like magic on Elizabeth Gurney. It kindled a spiritual fire in her soul that was never to go out. The Diary of Louisa Gurney, Elizabeth's younger sister, gives the first impression which William Savery made. She says:

Friend Savery has been here, who seems a charming man and a most liberal-minded Quaker. Betsy, *who spent all yesterday with him*, not only admires, but quite loves him. He appears to me a truly good man, and a most upright Christian, and such men are always loved. To me he is quite different from the common run of disagreeable Quaker preachers. In every society and sect there is always something good and worthy to be found.[2]

Richenda, another sister, has vividly described Elizabeth at this eventful meeting. She wore that day her new purple boots laced with scarlet, and she was restless in the early part of the meeting as she sat in a row with her six sisters. When William Savery began to speak she was at once arrested by the power of his voice and was all attention. Then she became agitated and began to weep. At the close of meeting she hurried across the house and asked her father if she might dine with her uncle Joseph at the Grove, where the visitor was being entertained, and again in the evening she was deeply moved, and "wept most of the way home."[3]

John Pitchford, a young Roman Catholic priest, who was visiting the Gurneys at the time, has described this evening meeting as follows:

In the evening I went to the Quakers' Meeting. As there

[1] *Journal of William Savery*, pp. 416, 417.
[2] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 75.
[3] *Life of Elizabeth Fry*, by Susanna Corder (Philadelphia), p. 33.

was a great crowd and no room to sit down, I placed myself on the staircase, but Mr. Joseph Gurney soon beckoned me thence, and placed me amongst the preachers, one of whom, when the sermon and prayer were finished, shook me by the hand, which I believe is their mode of announcing the conclusion of a Meeting. The name of the speaker was Savery, and his sermon the best I have ever heard among Quakers, so full of candour and liberality. My only objection to it was its excessive length —two hours and a half.[1]

Elizabeth's own account of what happened to her is quiet, but reveals that the arrow of conviction has hit her soul.

"I wish," she writes, "that the state of enthusiasm I am in may last, for to-day I have felt that there is a God. I have been devotional and my mind has been led away from the follies it is mostly wrapt up in. We have had much serious conversation; in short, what he said, and what I felt, was like a refreshing shower falling upon the earth that has been dried up for ages. It has not made me unhappy; I have felt ever since humble. I have longed for virtue. I hope to be truly virtuous; to let sophistry fly from my mind; not to be enthusiastic and foolish; but only to be so far religious as will lead to virtue. There seems nothing so little understood as religion."[2]

Richenda tells in a simple naïve passage how soon the transformation became noticeable. She says:

I have felt extremely uncomfortable about Betsy's Quakerism, which I saw, to my sorrow, increasing every day. She no longer joined in our pleasant dances, and singing she seemed to give up; she dressed as plain as she could, and spoke still more so. We all feel about it alike, and are truly sorry that one of us seven should separate herself in principles, actions and appearance from the rest. But I think we ought to try to make the best of it, and reconcile it as much as possible to our own minds. Betsy's character is certainly, in many respects, extremely improved since she has adopted these principles. She is industrious, charitable to the poor, kind and attentive to all of us; in short, if it was not for that serious manner which Quakerism throws over a person, Betsy would indeed be a most improved character.[3]

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[1] Quoted from *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. pp. 97, 98.
[2] *Life of Elizabeth Fry*, by Susanna Corder, p. 34.
[3] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 88.

Soon after this event Elizabeth Gurney went to London "to see the world" and to make up her mind which way of life to travel, after she had a good opportunity to taste of "the vanities." She attended operas and theatres; she went to balls and gay amusements; she saw and felt the fascination of the world. She has given us in her Diary of March 26, 1798, one very interesting glimpse of the attractions to which she was exposed:

> This morning I went to Amelia Opie's and had a pleasant time. I called on Mrs. Siddons who was not at home; then on Dr. Batty; then on Mrs. Twiss, who gave me some paint for the evening. I painted a little. I had my hair dressed and did look pretty for me. Mr. Opie, Amelia and I went to the opera concert. I own I do love grand company. The Prince of Wales was there. . . . I had a very pleasant evening indeed.[1]

On the other hand, she saw and heard William Savery, who was then in London, and his influence kept her from being "over-fond of gaieties." She appears to have carried him in imagination with her to all places of amusement and to have asked herself what he would think of it all. "I went to meeting in the evening," she writes in her diary from London, March 7, 1798; "I have not enough eloquence to describe it. William Savery's sermon was very affecting." She adds, "How well he has hit the state I have been in"; and on the 17th she writes, "May I never forget the impression William Savery has made on my mind. I thank God for having sent a glimmering of light through him into my heart, which I hope with care, and keeping it from the many draughts and winds of this life, may not be blown out, but become a brilliant flame."[2] Thirty years later she declares that William Savery's coming was "the casting die" in her life. Richenda, in her inimitable way, reports the effect of the London experiment on Elizabeth:

> Betsy is come back, she has been a good deal improved by her journey; she has seen a good deal of William Savery, whose whole soul seems formed and made for true religion and perfect faith. From the workings of her own mind and her acquaintance

[1] *Memoirs* (London, 1847), vol. i. p. 53. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 53.

with him, *Betsy seems to be changed from a complete sceptic to a person who has entire faith in a Supreme Being and a future state*, and I should suppose she feels all the delight which such a belief must bring with it.[1]

The change in her character and habits became very marked. She resolved to be out and out a Quaker—"a plain Friend," though at first she felt "quite in a flutter over saying thee" at a dinner party.

Soon after her return from London, with her mind made up to the sticking-point, she had an experience of more than ordinary interest. For a long period before this she had been having a recurrent dream, due almost certainly to a terror of the sea caused by some early childhood incident. She dreamed as often as once a week that she was almost caught by the sea and carried away into its depth, followed by a conscious agony and terror of drowning. After her decision was finally made, she dreamed that the sea rose in its power as usual and swept in towards her, but she found that she was in a safe place beyond it and that it could not reach her. From that time her dream of terror ceased to recur and its spell was for ever broken.[2]

Deborah Darby, another gifted itinerant Minister, came to Norwich a little later with a message which marked a new stage in Elizabeth's development.[3] At a family "opportunity" Deborah Darby suddenly addressed Elizabeth, declaring that the latter was under the hand of God to be "a light to the blind; speech to the dumb; and feet to the lame." The comment in the diary is, "Can it be?" It should be mentioned in this connection that her ideal Minister, William Savery, during that period of his momentous visit, had already become aroused over the condition of the women in Newgate, and may very likely have put the first seeds of love for the poor

[1] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 89.

[2] *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 60.

[3] Deborah Darby (1754–1810) was the daughter of John Barnard, and married Samuel Darby of Upperthorpe in 1776. She first appeared in ministry in 1779, and steadily advanced in insight and power until she became one of the most effective "publishers of Truth" in the Society. In the hand of God she became an important instrument in the preparation for service and ministry of two of the leading Friends of the nineteenth century—Stephen Grellet and Elizabeth Fry.

prisoner in her soul. This important passage appears in his *Journal* for this period of 1798:

For several days past my mind has been much turned to think of the poor prisoners in Newgate; four men and one woman were executed last week, and several more intended for this week. It is truly an afflicting circumstance, that numbers are continually sent out of the world in that way, in this country; many for small crimes. The woman now under sentence, had passed a bank-note of only twenty shillings value, knowing it to be counterfeit; her master gave her an excellent character, except in that one instance, yet no pardon could be obtained. Believing it right to make the attempt, though it was very trying to me again to enter those dismal abodes of the wretched, and having the company of a few Friends, we were readily admitted. Had an interview with a young man of respectable family, condemned for a species of forgery, though it was believed by most people, that no fraud was designed. We had a humbling time—such another baptizing season I never remember on a like occasion; he was greatly contrited, and bathed in tears, and his wife being present, was very thankful, and it was with difficulty we retired from this most extraordinary affecting scene, which I have no language to describe, but trust I shall never forget it: in the midst of judgment, the Lord eminently remembered mercy. The poor man continued calm, and died in reverent hope in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. Much interest had been made for him, but to no purpose.[1]

From this time on, Elizabeth Gurney became interested in the condition of the poor and was a frequent visitor in their homes. Walking one day in the park she met a girl about her own age carrying a bag of flour. She stopped the girl, entered into conversation with her, and asked her how much it cost a year for her clothes. The girl thought it cost about ten shillings. On her return home Betsy Gurney persuaded her father to allow her to adopt this girl, which permission was freely granted, and Molly Norman became the first of her many charges.[2] She obtained permission to use the laundry at Earlham, and soon gathered there the children of the nearby neighbourhoods, amounting to seventy in number, and endeavoured to train them in the first steps of the religious and

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 449.

[2] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 105.

moral life. They were irreverently known among the lively sisters as "Betsy's Imps." Already in this early stage her proclivity was clearly to be seen. Her only trouble with the early charities was that they were too easy. She wished for a thornier path and a more crucifying life. Looking back after the first year of her new way of life had passed, she thanks God for "the gentle leadings my soul has had," and adds, "the light of Christianity has burst upon my mind." Still more significant is her reflection upon Deborah Darby's prophecy: "I think my feelings that night at Deborah Darby's were the most exalted I ever remember. My mind felt clothed with light as with a garment and I felt silenced before God."[1]

In 1800 she was married to Joseph Fry, and they began their married life in Mildred's Court, London. This step cost her one of the greatest struggles of her life. It seems clear from her diary that she was attracted by the thought of marriage, and that her heart responded to the proposal which she received. But she was deeply impressed with the conviction that marriage would interfere with the religious mission to which she now felt called. "Are not," she asked herself, "the active duties which I have to perform, if I follow the voice of truth in my heart, incompatible with the duties of a wife and mother?" Again she says: "My most anxious wish is that I may not hinder my spiritual welfare, which I have so much feared, as to make me often doubt if marriage were a desirable thing for me at this time, or even the thought of it." The vacillations of her mind in this crisis were due not to fickleness of will but rather to the overwhelming conviction of future mission and the fear that marriage might hopelessly mar what seemed to her to be God's work. In the end, after the deepest conflict of spirit, she accepted marriage, and through this union undoubtedly heightened all her powers of service.[2] She had even

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 89.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 103. For a different account, see *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. pp. 107-113.

before her marriage felt powerfully "moved" to speak in religious ministry, but she did not yield to her sense of duty in this direction until the death of her father in 1809, when by his open grave she poured out her soul in a public prayer of thanksgiving for the mercy extended to her dear father. From this time her gift in the ministry steadily enlarged in scope and power. She was possessed of a marvellous voice—rich, melodious, penetrating, full of pathos, and melting the listener with an indescribable quality. Her power in prayer was even more wonderful than when she addressed public meetings, but in both exercises she exhibited very rare gifts which, added to the majestic impressiveness of her manner and personality, produced an effect not to be forgotten. William Allen and William Forster, J. J. Gurney, and many others frequently refer in their diaries to the extraordinary effect of her communications.

"*C'est le don de Dieu!*" cried a German prince who interpreted for her while she addressed a large company of orphan children in a foreign land. There was an irresistible power and unusual convicting quality in this divinely-given voice.[1]

In 1809, after the death of her father and the death of Joseph Fry's father, which occurred near together, the Frys moved to Plashet, where she began almost at once to devote herself to the poor of that neighbourhood, and here prepared herself in actual practice for the larger work which lay before her. Her daughter Rachel has given a charming account of her mother's life at this period:

> Would that I could bring before you our mother as she was when we first lived at Plashet. The gentle firmness of her rule; the sober gracefulness of her carriage; her exceeding love and tenderness towards her little children, especially during their infancy; the cheerful invigorating influence she maintained over us; her care of her domestics, mental and bodily; her systematic attention to the poor. . . . Happy were we when summoned to accompany her into the village, but happier still if "Irish Row"

[1] See *A Brief Memoir of Elizabeth Fry* (Philadelphia, 1845), p. 21.

was to be our destination. Whether it was the noise and dirt and broad Irish accent, or the little ragged sunburnt children who crawled before the doors, I know not, but charming it certainly was.

Invocations to "Madame Fry" to "step in here," beseechings to go elsewhere; requests, petitions, wants, desires; whilst children, pigs, and poultry joined their voices to the general clamour, formed a never-to-be-forgotten scene, and all this contrasted with her gentle voice and quiet decision, either granting, or refusing, or promising to consider what was asked. Her ready sense of the droll was often excited on these expeditions. I can see her now, with a look of irresistible amusement, seated in Molly Malony's room, on a pail reversed for the occasion, dusted with the last remnant of Molly's apron, who meanwhile, with black dishevelled locks, chased children and chickens, screaming and fluttering, from the potato-heap in one corner to the pile of straw in the other, in the vain hope of dislodging them from her apartment.

By degrees, our mother's influence amongst her poor Irish neighbours became apparent. The Roman Catholic priest was won over to many of her plans. Bibles were circulated freely, several learned to read, and without interference with their peculiar faith, they gradually discovered that good conduct and sobriety had their reward.[1]

In 1813 Elizabeth Fry, now the mother of eight children, and reduced to straitened financial circumstances through the speculations of her brother-in-law,[2] began her work of reform in Newgate prison, an event of the first significance in the history of moral correction. When she first asked permission to visit the women prisoners the governor of the prison endeavoured to dissuade her from hazarding her life among the dirty, almost naked, besotted, fierce, and abusive women. "I thank thee," Elizabeth replied, "but I am not afraid." Her first reference to this work is very simply given in her diary as follows:

*Second Month*, 16*th*.—Yesterday we were some hours at Newgate, with the poor female felons, attending to their outward

[1] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. pp. 218-220.

[2] For the moment actual bankruptcy was prevented by the financial assistance of Elizabeth's brothers, Joseph John and Samuel. Joseph Fry, however, became bankrupt in 1828.

necessities—we had been twice previously. Before we went away, dear Anna Buxton uttered a few words in supplication, and very unexpectedly to myself, I did also. I heard weeping, and I thought they appeared much tendered ; a very solemn quiet was observed ; it was a striking scene, the poor people on their knees around, in their deplorable condition.[1]

About the same time she wrote to her boys, who were on a visit at Earlham Hall, giving them an impression of what she had seen :

I have lately been twice to Newgate prison to see after the poor prisoners, who had little infants almost without clothing. If you saw how small a piece of bread they are allowed every day, you would be very sorry, for they have nothing else to eat unless their friends give them a trifle. I could not help thinking when in the prison, what sorrow and trouble those have who do wrong, and they have not the comfort of feeling amidst all their trials that they have endeavoured to do their duty.[2]

A companion who attended Elizabeth Fry in one of her prison visits has thus described her impressions of the scene :

The railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situations with the most boisterous violence, and begging with the utmost vociferation. I felt as if I were going into a den of wild beasts. I recollect quite shuddering when the door closed upon us and we were locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions.[3]

The birth of another child[4] and other occurrences and occupations prevented Elizabeth Fry at this time from pushing her great concern forward, though during the years between 1813 and 1816, in company with her brother-in-law Samuel Hoare, she visited the women in Coldbath-Fields House of Correction, and she was gathering information about the condition of the prisons throughout England. Some time in 1816 she recommenced her visits to the poor women in Newgate, at her own request spending some hours alone with the women, reading the Bible to them and speaking messages of love to their

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 225.
[2] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 252.
[3] *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 284.
[4] Elizabeth Fry had in all eleven children.

souls. As she progressed in her work with the women, she succeeded in forming, in 1817, a school in Newgate for teaching the children of the prisoners and the young criminals who were at that time almost always made worse by their period in prison. She has given in her diary many affecting accounts of women sentenced to death. The account of one poor woman who deeply touched her motherly heart may be given as a sample of many similar cases:

> My mind has also been deeply affected in attending a poor woman who was executed this morning. I visited her twice; this event has brought me into much feeling, attended by some distressingly nervous sensations in the night, so that this has been a time of deep humiliation to me, thus witnessing the effect and consequence of sin. This poor creature murdered her baby, and how inexpressibly awful now to have *her* life taken away! The whole affair has been truly afflicting to me, to see what poor mortals may be driven to through sin and transgression, and how hard the heart becomes, even to the most tender affections.[1]

Her two brothers-in-law, Samuel Hoare and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, and a small group of her personal friends, formed a society for dealing with juvenile offenders and for reforming the criminal code and the existing prison methods, to all of which work Elizabeth Fry made a large and important contribution. In 1817 an Association was formed under her direction for the improvement of female prisoners in Newgate. This Association was largely composed of Friends and proved to be an important instrument of good. The main object of this Association was:

> To provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety, and industry which may render them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it.[2]

John Howard, who was Elizabeth Fry's forerunner, had already revealed the appalling character of the prisons and

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 279.
[2] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 280.

the failure of existing methods of correction, but the work of reform had not gone very far, and a new step forward was urgent.[1]

As the great work of transformation went forward in Newgate, the Lord Mayor of London and several Aldermen visited the prison and were amazed at what they found. They proceeded to adopt the plan of the Association as a part of the regular system of Newgate. A gentleman who visited Newgate at this time has left this impressive account of what he saw:

I went and requested permission to see Mrs. Fry, which was shortly obtained, and I was conducted by a turnkey to the entrance of the women's wards. On my approach, no loud or dissonant sounds or angry voices indicated that I was about to enter a place which I was credibly assured had long had for one of its titles that of "Hell above ground." The courtyard, into which I was admitted, instead of being peopled with beings scarcely human, blaspheming, fighting, tearing each other's hair, or gaming with a filthy pack of cards for the very clothes they wore (which often did not suffice even for decency), presented a scene where stillness and propriety reigned. I was conducted by a decently-dressed person, the newly appointed yardswoman, to the door of a ward where, at the head of a long table, sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners, who were engaged in needlework around it. Each wore a clean-looking blue apron and bib, with a ticket having a number on it suspended from her neck, curtsied respectfully, and then, at a signal given, resumed their seats and employments. Instead of a scowl, leer, or ill-suppressed laugh, I observed upon their countenances an air of self-respect and gravity, a sort of consciousness of their improved character and the altered position in which they were placed. I afterwards visited the other wards, which were the counterparts of the first.[2]

The Rev. C. B. Taylor in his *Personal Recollections* has left a striking account of the effect of Elizabeth Fry's visits. The following extract will give some idea of the power of her life in this unusual ministry:

I accompanied Mrs. Fry on two occasions to Newgate, and I

[1] Howard always gave credit to Friends for advice and help in the development of his prison work, especially to Dr. John Fothergill.

[2] *Life*, p. 251.

was present when she read a portion of the Word of God to the women in the room which was then appropriated to that purpose. Tier above tier rose the seats at the end of the room, a gallery of wooden steps many feet high, and extending from wall to wall; and on that gallery the female prisoners, many of them the very refuse of society, were seated; and as the eye passed from face to face, different as the features were, the expression of every countenance was, in one sense, alike, for they wore the unmistakable stamp of boldness, degradation, and vice; on some the bleared flatness of face, from whence all trace of womanly feeling had disappeared; on others the vulgar snivel, seeming from time to time to twist the lips and nose together. It was indeed a shocking and most distressing spectacle, that range of about a hundred women's faces, with the various types of vice and crime written on the lines of almost every one. But there they sat in respectful silence every eye fixed upon the grave, sweet countenance of the gentle lady who was about to address them. A table was before her, on which lay the Holy Bible. She seated herself in the chair placed for her, and after a pause for silent prayer of some minutes, she quietly opened the inspired volume. She turned to the prophet Isaiah, and read aloud the fifty-third chapter, that wonderful and most affecting portion of the Word of God, in which the prophet realized and depicted as an eye-witness the mysterious and unspeakable suffering of the Divine Redeemer. Never till then, and never since then, have I heard any one read as Elizabeth Fry read that chapter—the solemn reverence of her manner, the articulation, so exquisitely modulated, so distinct, that not a word of that sweet and touching voice could fail to be heard. While she read her mind seemed to be intensely absorbed in the passage of Scripture and in nothing else. She seemed to take in to her own soul the words which she read, and to apply them to herself: and then she raised her head, and after another pause of silence, she spoke to the wretched women before her.

Her address was short and so simple that it must have been intelligible to the capacities of her hearers; and it was soon evident that it had come home to the hearts of many there by the subdued expression of their countenances, and by the tears that flowed freely from eyes which perhaps had never shed such tears till then.[1]

In 1818 Elizabeth Fry was asked to give an account before a Committee of the House of Commons of the prison conditions and the new methods that were being introduced. She said, in part:

[1] *Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. pp. 283, 284.

I think I may say we have full power among them, though we use nothing but kindness. I have never proposed a punishment, and yet I think it is impossible, in a well-regulated house, to have rules more strictly attended to than they are.

Our habit is constantly to read the Scripture to them twice a day; many of them are taught, some can read a little themselves. It has had an astonishing effect; I never saw the Scriptures received in the same way. When I have sometimes gone and said it was my intention to read, they would flock upstairs after me as if it were a great pleasure I had to afford them.

When asked by the Committee if the ladies confined themselves to the reading of the Scriptures, without inculcating any peculiar doctrine, Elizabeth Fry replied:

We consider, from the situation we fill, as it respects the public, as well as the poor creatures themselves, that it would be highly indecorous to press any particular doctrine of any kind—anything beyond the fundamental doctrines of Scripture.

The Committee inquired if some prisoners had not suffered from want of clothing? Elizabeth Fry said: "I could describe such scenes as I should hardly think it delicate to mention." A woman had been brought in recently, with "hardly a covering, no stockings, and only a thin gown. We provided clothing immediately for the woman and for her baby, which was born a few hours after she came in."

When asked if she thought any reformation could be effected without employment, she replied: "I should believe it impossible. We may instruct as we will, but if we allow them their time, and they have nothing to do, they naturally must return to their evil passions."

Elizabeth Fry closed her evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons with the following remarks:

I will just add, that I believe if there were a prison fitted up for us which we might visit as inspectors, if employment were found for our women, little or no communication allowed with the city, and room given to class them, with female servants only—if there were a thousand of the most unruly women, they would be in excellent order in one week. Of that I have not the least doubt.[1]

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 317-324.

In 1827 Elizabeth Fry published her *Observations on the Visiting, Superintendence and Government of Female Prisoners*, which contained her well-considered conclusions on the problem of crime and correction. It was a small book of less than one hundred pages, but it is full of wisdom and insight. Even more important and valuable was the *Report addressed to the Marquess Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland*, also printed in 1827.

She expressed as her opinion that extreme severity of punishment renders criminals callous rather than afraid to commit new crimes. She is steadfastly opposed to solitary confinement. She recommends that new prisoners be entirely separated from vicious and hardened criminals, but that they have large opportunity for social intercourse with sober and well-conducted persons. Her faith in the redeeming influence of kindness and love and truth knew no limits, and it is universal testimony that this faith was justified by results. A distinguished Minister from America who visited Newgate wrote as follows of his experience :

> I have seen Elizabeth Fry in Newgate, and I have witnessed there the miraculous effects of true Christianity upon the most depraved beings.[1]

Gradually her work widened out and touched almost all aspects of criminal treatment. She took up the condition of transported criminals, and exerted herself to induce the Government to make proper regulations for the voyages to New South Wales, and to provide suitable homes there and proper employment under guidance and oversight, so that a new life might be begun. She visited with one exception every transport conveying prisoners which sailed from England between 1818 and 1841.[2] She worked at the same time for the founding of day nurseries, for the improvement of the condition of the coast-guards, for the care and oversight of little children both at home and in France, for the formation of societies to prevent begging and imposture, for the assistance of discharged prisoners, and all the time while this multi-

[1] Quoted from article on Elizabeth Fry in *Nat. Dict. of Biog.*
[2] G. K. Lewis, *Elizabeth Fry* (London, 1910), p. 54.

farious work was going on she was preaching in Quaker meetings a transforming gospel both to rich and poor. Her fame became almost world-wide. She received visits from the most distinguished persons of the time, and she was invited in turn to visit not only the English King and Queen, but also many reigning sovereigns on the continent. Her influence upon the men at the head of government in England came to be very great and she made a deep impression on the King of Prussia and his family, on Louis Philippe and his Queen, and she had a strong moral and religious hold upon members of the royal family in Russia. But her fame will always rest upon her noble work among the women of Newgate, the real glory of her life was the miraculous effect of her love, her grace, her faith in God and in the possibilities of human life, even though it had gone astray—in short the effect of her Christianity on seemingly depraved and outcast people.

Through all the years of her remarkable work of relief and of her tender ministration—coming to an end only with her death in 1845—Elizabeth Fry had the constant support and assistance of William and Anna Forster, and the powerful help of her brother, Joseph John Gurney, and her brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who died respectively in 1847 and 1845. William Forster was spared almost ten years after the death of Elizabeth Fry, and until the end of his earthly career he was always engaged in promoting some form of human relief. Intensely religious and strongly evangelical in his faith, he was nevertheless one of the most tender lovers of men, one of the most devoted humanitarian spirits the Society of Friends has ever produced and nurtured. His son, William Edward Forster, who almost adored his father, though he himself ceased to be a member of the Society in 1850, wrote as follows in 1848 of William Forster's practical religion :

> I have been vastly impressed with his liberality of thought and feeling, and very much struck with the way in which his heart and head appear to be occupied with plans for the temporal

good of his fellow-creatures, as though this life must be looked after before the other. Almost all his objects—care of the poor, hospitals, soup kitchens, sanitary improvements, and the like, and even education, peace, anti-slavery, and other such agitations, bear quite as much on the conditions of the body as the soul; as though he now thought his duty to be rather to bring about the results of Christianity than to preach its doctrines. Possibly, however, his tone and conversation may give me this impression on account of *his awful reverence for religion*, as though it were almost profanity to talk thereof.[1]

One of the most striking pieces of service which this good man rendered was his personal work of relief and spiritual ministry in Ireland during the famine years of 1846 and 1847. In the midsummer of 1846 the potato crop was suddenly destroyed, plunging Ireland, then largely dependent upon that one crop, into dire calamity. William Forster felt a clear call to travel through the most afflicted districts, to obtain accurate information of the condition of the people, to devise means and methods of relief, and to bring some touch of human fellowship and love into the lives of these terribly distressed men and women. He acted throughout in conjunction with "the central relief committee of the Society of Friends in Ireland," which was a very efficient organization.[2]

William Forster went to Ireland in the end of November 1846, his son William Edward having gone somewhat earlier, and carried on his work through the most trying weather of an inclement winter amid painful scenes of misery and suffering. His diary contains ejaculations like the following: "O what a mass of misery," "most harrowing sights." Tender-hearted and sensitive as he was, he felt the misery so keenly that it almost killed him.

"I think," he writes, "I have never before passed through such suffering of mind, unless I were to except those moments when I seemed to myself racked with unutterable intensity of feeling in thinking of the horrors of the slave trade."[3]

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[1] *Life of W. E. Forster*, vol. i. p. 254.

[2] This committee received and administered about £200,000 ($1,000,000), about half of which amount was contributed in America.

[3] *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 222.

Again he says:

> I have not nerve—there is no need to tell my weakness—to look upon the suffering of the afflicted; it takes too much possession of me, and almost disqualifies me for exertion. But what a comfort to believe, and to be made sure, that there is One who does look upon it all.[1]

His intense sympathy did not, however, interfere with the efficiency of his work. He organized various forms of employment for the poor peasantry. He worked in beautiful co-operation with the Roman Catholic clergy, and best of all, perhaps, he carried human love and sympathy into the very hearts and souls of these needy people. He remarks with much simplicity: "There is *that* which no poor-law, nor merely legal provision of any kind can do," and he adds that "this line of service," namely, "to sympathize with this poor people," is that to which he is mainly called. When one has followed these months of agonizing labour he feels the full significance of the simple entry in the diary, under date of April 12, 1847: "What a mercy to get once more to dear old England!"

The suffering and misery of these years of famine left an ineffaceable impression upon both father and son. William Edward Forster in 1847 wrote these memorable words:

> I will not now discuss the causes of this condition, in order to apportion blame to its authors; but of this one fact there can be no question, that the result of our social system is that vast numbers of our fellow-countrymen, the peasantry of one of the richest nations the world ever knew, have not leave to live. Surely such a social result as this is not only a national misfortune, but a national sin, crying loudly to every Christian citizen to do his utmost to remove it. No one of us can have a right to enjoy either riches or repose until, to the extent of his ability, he tries to wash himself of all share in the guilt of this fearful inequality, which will be a blot in the history of our country and make her a byword among the nations.[2]

It would not do to omit, from this all too brief account

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 235. [2] *Life of W. E. Forster*, vol. i. p. 198.

of the birth of the Quaker philanthropist spirit, any mention of the founding of "the Retreat" for insane at York, and the inauguration of new methods of caring for those unfortunates whose minds were out of tune. In fact, this work of Friends for the care of the insane is one of the most signal of all their contributions to human relief. Bad as was the condition of the prisoners, the condition of the insane was even worse, when in 1792 William Tuke of York, a shining name, set his hand to the task of creating an institution in which there should be no concealment of anything that was done to the inmates, and in which all patients should be treated with kindness as the best medicine for the mentally diseased. It took an iron will and a dedicated heart to overcome the obstacles, to secure the funds, to give the vision of one individual to the larger group of a Quarterly Meeting, and patiently to work through into visible fact the happy idea of "the more excellent way." It was, however, finally accomplished and "The Retreat," so named in a burst of inspiration by William Tuke's wife, was opened for patients in 1796, the inmates who were poor being taken at a weekly rate of four shillings.

From the very first the effects of kind treatment and the medicine of sympathy worked almost miracles. Persons who arrived frantic and in irons were reduced almost immediately to obedience and to orderly behaviour.[1] One or two concrete instances of what happened in the early days of "The Retreat" will sufficiently illustrate the character of the innovation:

A man was admitted who had been for twenty years chained and naked; with the exception of the occasional use of arm-straps, no personal restraint was employed from the moment of his admission. He was soon induced to wear clothes and adopt orderly habits.

One day a man of Herculean size was brought to the institution, and the case is thus described by the author of the *Description*: "He had been afflicted several times before;

[1] See Daniel Hack Tuke's *History of the Insane in the British Isles* (London, 1882), p. 121.

and so constantly during the present attack had he been kept chained that his clothes were contrived to be taken off and put on by means of strings, without removing his manacles. They were, however, taken off when he entered the Retreat, and he was ushered into the apartment where the superintendent and matron were supping. He was calm. His attention appeared to be arrested by his new situation. He was desired to join in the repast, during which he behaved with tolerable propriety. After it was concluded, the superintendent conducted him to his apartment, and told him the circumstances on which his treatment would depend; that it was his anxious wish to make every inhabitant in the house as comfortable as possible, and that he sincerely hoped the patient's conduct would render it unnecessary for him to have recourse to coercion. The maniac was sensible of the kindness of his treatment. He promised to restrain himself, and he so completely succeeded, that, during his stay, no coercive means were ever employed towards him." When excited, and vociferous, the superintendent went to his room and sat quietly beside him. After a period of increased irritation, the violent excitement subsided, and he would listen with attention to the persuasions and arguments of his friendly visitor. "Can it be doubted," asks Tuke, "that in this case the disease had been greatly exasperated by the mode of management, or that the subsequent kind treatment had a great tendency to promote his recovery?"[1]

Great as was the benefit of this admirable institution upon the lives of these sufferers themselves, still greater was the benefit which came through the far-reaching influence of "The Retreat" upon all other institutions for the care of the insane and upon the methods of their treatment among all civilized peoples. Tuke's name stands with that of Pinel, the French alienist, as the names of the foremost reformers in this field.[2]

In the list of philanthropic undertakings might also be

[1] Daniel Hack Tuke's *History of the Insane in the British Isles* (London, 1882), pp. 120, 121.

[2] The story is well told in Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* (York, England, and Philadelphia, U.S.A., 1813), and in Daniel Hack Tuke's *History* referred to above. It should be noted that American Friends had already taken a very important part in the creation of an advanced type of hospital for the sick and for the insane. A concern for a hospital was brought forward in Philadelphia Monthly Meeting in 1709. The project failed at the time, but when Benjamin Franklin and other distinguished citizens of Philadelphia took the matter up again in 1751, Friends became the largest contributors in the movement to build the Pennsylvania Hospital, and they were then, and have been since, in the majority on the Board of Managers.

included the creation of great centres of education for Friends and others in this period of enthusiasm for the liberation, expansion, and enlargement of individual life. It seems more appropriate, however, to deal with this subject in a separate chapter. The leaders in this movement for wider and more efficient education were, like these other leaders already studied in this chapter, persons of large philanthropic sympathies, and they were for the most part men who made important contributions to their generation. The names of Dr. John Fothergill in England, and John Dickinson and Moses Brown in America, to mention only three among the early leaders in education, are names of men of real distinction. They are not only indissolubly attached to educational institutions, but they are woven as well into the very tissue of the public life of their times.

The nineteenth century brought forth within the Society of Friends a new attitude toward intemperance, and its determined stand against this desolating evil has had beyond question momentous results. Friends throughout their entire history have guarded against the indulgence of dangerous appetites, and they have always seen that drunkenness was a source of immense suffering and misfortune throughout the world. But they did not realize for many generations that abstinence from the use of intoxicants was required of them. Some of the most worthy members, even some of the most gifted Ministers, brewed beer without any compunction. They also drank with considerable freedom much stronger beverages than beer. Their moral efforts were limited to the preservation of moderation. All meetings found it necessary to make rules and regulations for restraining the membership at times of marriages and burials when wines and liquors were served in large quantities. Burials are spoken of in the eighteenth century as "noisy festivals when wine and other strong liquors are served."[1] The minutes everywhere reveal the fact that many Friends fell in with the prevalent customs, served wine and liquors on the

[1] Minute of Philadelphia Y.M. of 1729.

occasions of marriages and burials, and that intoxication was by no means infrequent.[1]

The earliest printed *Discipline* of New England Yearly Meeting contains this interesting passage on funerals:

> Whereas at some burials, when people come from far, there may be occasion for some refreshment, yet it is advised that it be done with moderation, avoiding that indecent and unbecoming practice of using spirituous liquors; and that the behaviour of all Friends be with such gravity and sobriety as becomes the occasion; and if any appear otherwise, let such be reproved and dealt with as the case may require.[2]

The Monthly Meeting records show that this last clause was not an empty and unnecessary phrase.

Friends were urged to select their inns with care when they went away from home on journeys, to be "prudent in their behaviour" when in public places, to avoid intemperance both in eating and drinking, to forgo chewing tobacco or taking snuff, and to keep from foolish jesting.[3] A minute of London Yearly Meeting for 1754 on this subject became a part of the later Disciplines. It was as follows:

> We caution you against resorting to places of diversion, unnecessarily frequenting taverns and ale-houses, and mixing yourselves in such company and conversation as have a manifest tendency to corrupt your hearts and draw them aside from that steady and religious concern and reverent awe which dwell on the minds of true Christians. We especially warn you to beware of *the too frequent use* of spirituous liquors, and intemperance of every kind, but let your behaviour and conduct in all respects be such that your moderation may be known to all men.[4]

These cautions and advices to preserve moderation represent the standard position of the Society at the opening of the nineteenth century. A very much more advanced position begins to appear in America in the early years of the century. The pioneer meetings in Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee very early in their history took strong ground

[1] Philadelphia Y.M. adopted strong minutes on the subject in 1735, 1746, 1750, and in 1757, and still the same conditions continued.

[2] Edition of 1785, p. 51.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 19.

[4] London *Discipline* (ed. 1802), p. 105. Italics mine.

against the use of intoxicants. As early as 1811 White Water Monthly Meeting in Indiana requested the Yearly Meeting to issue "a caution to its members against either grinding grain for distilleries or selling it for distillation, or being in any way concerned in the transportation of it to or from market" The minute includes the distillation of fruit and every other production distilled for beverage purposes.[1] Monthly Meeting records show that there were occasional violations of Friends' standards of temperance, but the Overseers watched their flocks carefully in these matters, and each decade of the century reveals an increased desire on the part of Friends not only to keep the membership free from intemperance, but to join in a serious crusade against the traffic in intoxicating drinks as being a primary source of evil—of poverty, suffering and sin. From 1825 onwards very many Friends in all parts of America took a position of complete abstinence from the use of all intoxicants, and Yearly Meetings appointed Committees on Temperance which carried on a large amount of educational work within the membership.

By the middle of the century Friends in most sections of America had abolished the custom of using wines or liquors of any kind on their tables or for personal use anywhere or at any time, and some of their leading members came to be as strenuously devoted to the overthrow of the liquor traffic as they were for the emancipation of slaves.

This attitude formed more slowly in Great Britain and Ireland, but the sentiment gradually matured and accumulated power like a rolling snowball until it became a mighty social force. A report of Dublin Yearly Meeting for 1850 reveals how strongly the tide of sentiment was already running. The report says:

> On Fifth day the attention of the meeting was drawn to the education of youth, and to the promotion of temperance. Though the meeting did not appear in a state to make any advice in its collective capacity, in regard to the use or sale of ardent spirits, the minds of Friends appeared to be unusually impressed with the importance of the subject, and a feeling was evidently excited in

[1] *Minutes of White Water M.M.* for 1811.

favour of totally discountenancing the use of intoxicating liquors. The danger of promoting habits of intemperance by the free or frequent use of wine, was feelingly and impressively held up to view.[1]

The next half-century was to see the conscience of the world far more awakened on this all-important subject, and Friends were to take an important part in the moral campaign of enlightenment.[2] One of the finest and most effective of the English Quaker advocates of temperance was Samuel Bowly (1802–1884). He was a wise and devoted leader of many reform causes, but in a very special way his name is linked with the fight against the liquor traffic. Friends' Temperance Union was begun in 1852, and Samuel Bowly was for many years its president. He attained a national reputation as a champion of total abstinence. From 1850 onward there was a large number of well-known Friends who shared his attitude and who joined him in this contest.[3] I have dealt with Friends' work for temperance briefly and scantily. The reason for giving smaller space to this work of reform is that it was not of the same unique, creative, and outstanding character as was the work for peace, for the abolition of slavery, or for prison reform.

This chapter has gathered only a few of the first fruits out of a very extensive prairie harvest of good works. No attempt has been made to record in detail the complete work of individuals and of meetings for human liberation and for the betterment of social conditions of life. Enough has, however, been gathered here to show that a new spirit was coming to birth in the Society at the turn of the century and to indicate that the Quaker leaders were awakening to the call of a world "groaning and travailing in pain." If the new-born spirit had not been chilled and nipped by the early frost of theological controversy and

[1] *Friends' Review*, vol. iii. p. 662.

[2] Eli Jones, born in China, Maine, in 1807, became one of the leaders in the work of arousing opposition in his own State to the manufacture and sale of intoxicants, which led in 1851 to the passage of the famous "Maine Law."

[3] See Frederick Sessions, *Samuel Bowly* (London, 1903), and Frederick Sessions, *Two and a Half Centuries of Temperance Work* (London, 1893).

disastrous separations, the whole world would soon have felt the warmth and circulation of this passion of love and this dedication to human service.[1]

[1] There is a short monograph on *Some Social Aspects of the Society of Friends in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, by Alice Heald Mendenhall (Chicago, 1914). Two contributions of a solid and scholarly character have been made by German students: Dietrich von Dobbeler, *Sozialpolitik der Nächstenliebe, dargestellt am Beispiel "der Gesellschaft der Freunde"* (Goslar, 1912), and Dr. Auguste Jorns, *Studien über die Sozialpolitik der Quäker* (Karlsruhe, 1912).

# CHAPTER XI

## THE GREAT MIGRATION

In 1799 Joseph Dew, a Minister belonging to Trent River Monthly Meeting in North Carolina, having just returned from a visit of exploration in the Ohio section of the North-west Territory, solemnly uttered this prophecy to the Quaker group gathered round him: "I see the seed of God sown in abundance, extending far north-westward!"[1] The entire meeting, listening to the inspired words of Joseph Dew, was powerfully *moved*, and all the Friends of that region were "tendered" in spirit and convinced that it was right to migrate in a body to Ohio.

"So we undertook the work," one of them wrote, "and found the Lord to be a present helper in every needful time, as he was sought unto; yea to be as the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night; and thus we were led safely along until we arrived here."[2]

Something like what happened here in Trent River, Jones County, N.C., happened up and down the entire Atlantic coast from Georgia to Long Island, and in a less degree also in New York and New England. Whole meetings in many instances moved westward in a body, while in other meetings many families left their old homes and associations, and pushed out to find new homes and a new career in the wilderness of the north-west. In numbers this migration far exceeded the migration of Friends from Great Britain to the American Colonies in

[1] Letter of Borden Stanton, printed in Comly's *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. p. 218.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 219.

the seventeenth century, at the beginning of which one of the leaders of that movement also had a vision of great things to be and heard "an irresistible word," saying, "the seed in America shall be as the sand of the sea." [1]

This migration into the North-west Territory, which was destined to bring a very great expansion of the Society in America, was due primarily to the desire of Friends to move away from the environment of slavery and to get entirely free from its depressing influences, though there were many other contributing reasons for the shift of locality, as we shall see. Only very slowly and gradually did Friends awaken to the moral iniquity of human slavery. In the north the sentiment of opposition naturally grew and spread much more rapidly than it did in the south, where the "peculiar institution" was taken as a matter of course and was considered as a necessity of life. Visiting Ministers from England and from the northern meetings began by the middle of the eighteenth century to arouse the Friends in southern meetings to a sense of the wrongfulness of holding men and women in bondage, but at first their words fell on dull ears. John Woolman's first visit to Maryland and Virginia occurred in 1746. Again, in 1757–1758 he travelled through most of the southern meetings, his mind being "deeply bowed in this journey" over the conduct of Friends toward the negroes, and he felt that he could not accept free entertainment in homes where there were slaves.

> "These are people," he writes, "who have made no agreement to serve us, and who have not forfeited their liberty that we know of. These are the souls for whom Christ died, and for our conduct toward them we must answer before Him who is no respecter of persons." [2]

The visit of this tender saint bore some fruit, and his deep "concern" was taken up and carried forward by others who shared his sensitiveness of feeling. In 1764 William Reckitt of England and Benjamin Ferris of

[1] See my *Quakers in the American Colonies*, p. 51.
[2] Woolman's *Journal* (Whittier edition), pp. 109, 110.

Wilmington, Delaware, travelled through the southern meetings. They were disturbed in spirit over the low state of most of the meetings, and over the absence of vital religion in many of the homes which they visited. Benjamin Ferris spoke out plainly of the iniquity of what he calls "the merchandise of Babylon." Without any lack of frankness he told a Friend "who appeared in public by way of ministry" that slavery was

> . . . inconsistent with the design of the gospel dispensation which breathed goodwill toward men: and that as the gospel had not, in the fulness even of its dawning, taken place in their minds, it was not likely such could be ministers of a covenant they themselves were never brought into; and that I thought it impossible such could build up or edify in anything that was lastingly good.[1]

I have briefly told in *The Quakers in the American Colonies* the story of the awakening of Friends in the south to the evils of slavery and the gradual development of their Disciplines in reference first to the care of slaves, then in reference to the buying and selling of them and finally in reference to holding them at all.[2] These meetings which seemed to Benjamin Ferris so dull and dead in 1764, and of which he wrote, as he left the South, "By whom shall Jacob arise, he is so small, and, O Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name's sake? The wound seems so deep that I have been ready to conclude it is incurable in this generation,"[3] these very meetings produced leaders out of their own groups who helped to shake the Society in these sections entirely free from complicity with slavery.[4]

Barnaby Nixon, a very tender-minded Friend who was born in North Carolina in 1752 and who moved about

[1] "Journal of Benjamin Ferris," printed in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. pp. 255, 256.

[2] See especially *op. cit.* pp. 321-327. A fuller account is given in Stephen Weeks' *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, chap. ix.

[3] *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. p. 259.

[4] The most striking leader of this sort was Robert Pleasants of Virginia, who emancipated his own slaves, who was one of the founders of the Abolition Society of Virginia and who drew up a plan for the education of Blacks and People of Colour. *The Letter Book* of Robert Pleasants is in possession of Baltimore Y.M. (Orthodox), and is kept in their Record Vaults.

1778 into the limits of Burleigh Meeting in Virginia, has left in his simple *Memoirs* a short account of the southern awakening:

I was many times under a necessity of setting forth to my elder friends, the injustice of holding slaves; and pointing out to them the iniquity of the practice. Sometimes travelling Friends came among us, and were moved to stir up Friends' minds to a deeper consideration of the subject. Thus He with whom is no respect of persons, worked both immediately and instrumentally; until the concern became so general that the Yearly Meeting of Carolina passed a rule, that no Friend should sell a slave, except on some extraordinary occasion, such as keeping a husband and wife from being parted; which was to be judged of by the Monthly Meetings. And, in a little time, Friends were advised to set their slaves free, by signing emancipations for that purpose.

This was in the time of the revolutionary war.—The magistrates and people were highly enraged; and had numbers of the emancipated black people taken up and put in jails, to be sold at the county courts. Friends employed lawyers to plead their cause, which they did very notably; showing that at the time when those persons were liberated, there was no law in force to prohibit the emancipation of slaves, or to justify the practice of interrupting those who had been so emancipated. But the magistrates, notwithstanding, arbitrarily ordered a considerable number of them sold at public sale, both in Perquimans county, and in Pasquotank. The case was removed to the superior court, which gave judgment that the proceedings of the county courts were null and void. But the Assembly passed some kind of a law, to continue in bondage those that had been sold; and to take up and sell any that were freed by emancipation. Yea, the hearts of some have been so cruel, that they have at all times of the night gone in pursuit of the free black people—breaking open houses: some that have fled have been shot, and others taken by violent dogs, when the poor creatures had not been charged with the breach of any law; only because they had their just right to freedom granted by their former owners. For such cruel doings as these, how can the inhabitants (unless they repent and amend their ways) expect any thing better to follow than some heavy judgment as a scourge on the land, when the Lord arises to judge the cause of the poor and needy? My mind has often been much exercised on account of that oppression, and, in a particular manner, for the magistrates who were concerned in it.[1]

[1] *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. pp. 106-108.

But by far the most impressive piece of testimony to the sincerity of the Friends in the South and the costly sacrifice which they made to free their consciences is given in Sarah Harrison's *Memoirs*. She was born in Pennsylvania in 1748, passed through many disciplines and preparations, finally "saw the Light rise out of obscurity" and became a powerful Minister of the Gospel, though she was uneducated and illiterate. Her remarkable visit through the southern meetings occurred in 1788, in company with Norris Jones and Lydia Hoskins. They went as far south as Charleston, South Carolina, enduring terrible hardships of travel by waggon through woods and swamps and having "laborious exercising times" in meetings and families. Friends in many places were not yet quite ready for the rigorous action which she urged upon them. She writes as follows of the Friends in Charleston:

> Great has been the oppression which we have felt here; the gospel truths we have had to deliver being so repugnant to the disposition of the minds of most of the inhabitants, who, like many others, love ease and don't want their false rest disturbed. They *say* much against slave-holding; all we have conversed with agree that it is not right to hold their fellow-men in bondage, and wish they were all free, declaring that they are only a burden to them. But when anything is said to promote their freedom, they soon turn and say that they are not fit for freedom, because they are such poor helpless creatures.[1]

Up and down the land, from meeting to meeting, these three Friends went, "in winter's pinching cold and summer's scorching heat," sometimes in the valley and shadow of death and sometimes singing praises to Him who seemed to work miracles through them. Norris Jones writes:

> We have been engaged in visiting slave-holders in the verge [*i.e.* the limits] of Black Water Monthly Meeting [Virginia] and have the satisfaction to see the labour blessed so that *near fifty of that oppressed people were manumitted in our presence.* The power of Truth was livingly felt in many of these opportunities [*i.e.* family visits] to our humbling admiration.

[1] "Memoirs of Sarah Harrison," in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xi. p. 104.

He continues his account under date of Sixth month 6th:

We were at Piney-Woods meeting [North Carolina] which was large. Sarah Harrison had close work, and again touched on slave-holding. In the afternoon we met by accident a Friend who held twenty-three slaves. The subject was seriously gone into, and he, being reached by the power of Truth, was prevailed upon to manumit them, to the rejoicing of the hearts of many and to the peace of his own mind.[1]

Sarah Harrison's work on this memorable visit was so effective that it will not be out of place to give rather long extracts from Norris Jones's accounts of their experiences.

8th. At Old Neck meeting, which was very large. Thomas Saint, Lydia Hoskins and Sarah Harrison appeared in testimony; the last in a most singular, close, searching manner to the foremost rank. After dinner, had a memorable time with the slave-holders. After charging and silencing one Friend who held sixteen, the power of Truth so fastened on him, that the devil was cast out by prayer and fasting; and, after a time of silence, he gave up freely—and two other persons also set four free.

9th. We had a full opportunity with a widow and family where we lodged, and some of her neighbours. The power of Truth being present, her son set his two negroes free. From thence to J. N.'s, and his brother set four negroes at liberty.

10th. Went to see a slave-holder, and had an opportunity of four hours;—and we left him a slave-holder. I wrote two manumissions for ten, and left with him in hope he would sign them. Next day at Old Neck week-day meeting, S. H. had close, searching work again; dined at Thomas Saint's; afterward called at J. J.'s, and he manumitted ten negroes. The day following, after attending Piney-woods week-day meeting, we went to see a slave-holder, who, after much labour with him, manumitted his three slaves.

13th. We visited five families; four of whom were slave-holders; and close searching work we had with them. One Friend and his wife manumitted five slaves. It hath been a laborious week; but we have cause to believe the power of the Most High hath been with us, even to the pulling down of the strongholds which sin and satan have made. We have now finished in North Carolina.

22nd. I was well enough to go with a committee of the

[1] "Memoirs of Sarah Harrison," in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xi. p. 106.

Monthly Meeting of Black-water [Virginia], appointed to visit slave-holders. We visited four; one of whom manumitted one slave, after hard, laborious work. Next day, we went with said committee, and visited a man and his wife who held seven slaves —a searching time it was! Sarah Harrison appeared in awful supplication, and prayed that the key which opened the heart of Lydia, might be permitted to open the heart of the woman Friend present; which was granted, and she united with her husband in setting their slaves at liberty. I said in my heart, miracles have not ceased. Blessed be the name of God; and may he have the praise of his own work!—In the afternoon, we had a hard, laborious opportunity with I. W. which lasted several hours. A manumission was written for his slaves, but he would not sign it; although he was fully convinced, yet the power of darkness kept him bound. We took our leave of him and went to J. Bailey's to lodge.

24th. This morning the above Friend, I. W., came on foot to our lodgings, having had no rest; he brought the manumission and signed it, liberating four slaves. A humbling time it was;— the power of Truth overshadowed us; Sarah Harrison appeared in supplication,—and we parted with feelings of mutual joy. Then we went to N. J.'s. The most hardened spirit appeared in him, that we have met with. Sarah and myself laboured with him in a very close manner; but his heart appeared to be as hard as Pharaoh's: he declared he would not sign the manumission. So we left him, and rode to M. Baily's, fifteen miles; where we lodged. Next morning, he set twenty-two free. We then went back to N. J.'s to try him once more; but on our first seeing him, he appeared as determined against it as before, and said he would not do it. We said a good deal to him, as we sat in the wagon, and his wife desired he would set his slaves free. At length, the power of the Highest softened his hard heart;— he came and gave me his hand, and was broken, even to weeping. He asked us into his house, and we went in with him. He then got the manumission and signed it; and truly it was a memorable time; such as I never saw. Sarah Harrison appeared in awful supplication: the devil was cast out, and he was broken, as it were, all to pieces, and shed many tears; as did most or all present.

26th. We called to see a young woman who holds slaves, it being the second visit to her. But she would not give them up; and appeared to be one of the most hardened persons we had talked with on the subject. Next day we had a full opportunity with a widow who held slaves. She desired I would write a manumission; but did not choose to sign it, till her son saw it.

We also had an opportunity with a man who holds about twenty. He said he hoped he should see the evil of the practice. So, after being honest with them, we left them, and went toward Burleigh. On our way, we lodged with a slave-holder, who appeared determined to hold them at all events.

Thence, taking divers meetings on our way, we came to Scimino, where we met with a young man, a Friend, who held eleven slaves. We had a satisfactory opportunity with him, and he signed manumissions for them all, from a sense of religious duty. Not long after, we visited a widow who was a slave-holder; and after a laborious searching opportunity, she manumitted eleven negroes. Next day, we had an opportunity with this widow's son and her granddaughter, on the subject of holding slaves; but alas! they set more store by the negroes than by their right in society! The day following we spent five hours with S. P. and his wife, steadily, on the subject of slavery. Being favoured with the calming influence of our heavenly Father's love, they manifested more coolness than common. At length, the power of Truth prevailed, and the wife, to whom they belonged, gave up cheerfully, and they manumitted seventeen.

In the latter end of the 7th month, we set out from Genito, to visit slave-holders. First, to a place where the wife was willing, but her dark-spirited husband would not comply. Thence to his brother's, who after much labour, set two slaves free. We then visited several Friends who hold slaves; but it amounted to little more than breaking their false peace. Next day we called to see four Friends, slave-holders; and two of them set eighteen free. But one of them, a widow, like Lot's wife, looked back, and wanted the papers given up.[1]

Quite similar to the work of Sarah Harrison, though by no means so remarkably successful in positive results, was that of the other visiting Friends who came during these critical years following the Revolutionary War. Hugh Judge of Pennsylvania gives us an interesting glimpse in his *Journal* of the way in which Ministers with a religious concern for the manumission of slaves persisted and held on until they saw the travail of their soul accomplished. Writing of his visit in North Carolina, he says:

After meeting we went home with a woman Friend, whose husband was not a member, but very kind to Friends. We had

[1] *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xi. pp. 106-110.

some friendly conversation with him concerning his holding a black man in bondage, and proposed to him to set him free, his wife being very willing: but he discovered an unwillingness to let him go free, and we laboured with him till late bed-time. When we parted I told him to think deeply of it till morning, when I expected he would be willing to set him free. In the morning, I desired Isaac Jacobs to write a manumission, and soon after it was done, the man came in. After a pause, it was proposed that he should sign it, which he did, and had it witnessed by several Friends.[1]

It is difficult for us at this long distance to realize what this fidelity to principle and obedience to conscience cost the Friends of the South. The slaves constituted in these regions a large element of wealth. Friends, as others, had formed the habit of living by slave-labour, and furthermore, they exposed themselves to the stern disapproval of their neighbours when they manumitted their negroes and went to work with their own hands. They soon found themselves living in a social world into which they did not fit. Even their noble plans to liberate their negroes and start them in a new life of freedom were constantly frustrated. In the Carolinas the negroes manumitted by Friends were seized and sold again into slavery, and always into a much worse slavery than that which had been their lot in Friends' homes. Friends fought this action through the Courts and won their case, but the legislature at once passed an Act which made the seizing and selling of manumitted slaves legal.

Precisely at the time when the conditions of life for Friends in sections where slavery prevailed had become almost intolerable, a new world suddenly opened before them in the great north-west, like a divinely prepared Canaan. By the Ordinance of 1787 the North-west Territory was organized for settlement. Slavery was for ever barred out of this magnificent domain, out of which the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan have since been made. It was an extraordinarily rich and fertile region, with many attractions and few forbidding features. The most serious obstacle

[1] *Memoirs and Journal of Hugh Judge* (Byberry, Pa., 1841), p. 38.

was the distance and the difficulty of travel across the almost roadless country thither. That was an obstacle, however, which would not long deter the valiant and forward-looking men and women who had already been brave enough to manumit their slaves and to face the opposition of their neighbours.

Before dealing with the migrations from the slave-holding sections of the country, we must first give a brief account of an earlier migratory movement into western Pennsylvania from the meetings of New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and northern Virginia. This was plainly not a movement to escape the contaminations of slavery. It was a movement for the sake of change and in the hope of finding easier conditions of life. In fact, this entire migration was partly pushed on by eager spirits who felt the lure of the new and untried, the desire to work out their fortunes under new stars, the hope that a change of locality would bring into operation forces and powers for which they sought in vain in their habitual surroundings. Joshua Evans, who visited these new emigrants in western Pennsylvania in 1797, has given us an interesting glimpse of their state of mind, though it must be noted that he was a hyper-conscientious person and haunted by the impression that the world was desperately prone to evil. His comment on the new settlers is as follows:

> It seems to me they have in too general a way come over the western mountains to settle for the sake of this world's treasure. Many of them appear to have obtained this, and are eagerly pursuing after more. Their minds are so overcharged with cares of this kind that the "better part" hath been wounded both in parents and children. A great part of their conversation is about *more land*, *new countries*, and *the things of this world*. I laboured to turn their minds to a consideration of their latter end, etc.[1]

The Quaker drift toward western Pennsylvania began some time in the 'sixties. Henry Beeson from Virginia seems to have been the pioneer. He went from Berkeley County toward the end of the sixth decade of the

[1] "Joshua Evans' Journal" in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. x. p. 183.

eighteenth century and made the first settlement in what was afterwards Uniontown at the forks of the two branches of Redstone Creek, not far from the Monongahela River.[1] By 1773, when Zebulon Heston and John Parish passed through this region on their way home from a visit to the Indians in Ohio, they found a little group of Friends in this newly-settled region, and they had religious services with the Quaker pioneers.[2]

When the little Quaker settlement was still very young and small, and when the isolated families were scattered far apart in the almost unbroken forests, groups of Indians came surging about the Beeson's house one night at a time when the French and Indians were fiercely hostile to all English settlers. It seemed as though only a miracle could save the helpless family, and something like a miracle happened. They overheard an old Indian explain to the rest of the warriors that this family belonged to the "broad brims," or "William Penn's people," and that therefore they must not be molested. The Indians thereupon soon withdrew without doing any harm—a powerful testimony to the fact that love begets love even to the third and fourth generation, and even, too, in the hearts of so-called savage men.[3]

These settlers, ever increasing in numbers, requested of Hopewell Monthly Meeting in 1782 the privilege of having a Preparative Meeting set up in the new country, and in 1785 they had increased to such an extent that Westland Monthly Meeting was established, to be held alternately on the east and west side of the Monongahela River. It should be explained that Hopewell Meeting was itself due to an earlier migration. About 1730, Friends from Salem, New Jersey, and another group from Nottingham, Pennsylvania, formed a settlement along the Monocacy River, a tributary to the Potomac in Maryland, and they formed a meeting known by the name of "Monoquesy." In 1732 Alexander Ross, at the head of

[1] Sherman Day's *Historical Collections* (Phila., 1843), p. 340.
[2] Bowden's *History of the Society of Friends in America* (London, 1854), vol. ii. p. 378.
[3] Day's *Collections*, p. 340.

a company of Friends from Pennsylvania and Maryland, secured from the Governor and Council of Virginia a tract of one hundred thousand acres of land for a colony on Opequan Creek, another tributary to the Potomac. These settlements led to the formation of Hopewell Monthly Meeting (Virginia) in 1735. The migration southward from Pennsylvania continued to grow for many years, until there were twenty local meetings and five Monthly Meetings formed in this region under a Quarterly Meeting, named at first Fairfax and later Warrington and Fairfax. As we have seen, the first pioneers to Western Pennsylvania came from the Hopewell region and the new meetings, formed along the Monongahela, belonged to Hopewell Monthly Meeting and Fairfax Quarterly Meeting, which, until 1789, were subordinate to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. At this date (1789) these meetings were transferred to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and the Susquehanna River was fixed upon as the boundary line between the two Yearly Meetings. From the year 1789 onwards, the meetings created out of the great migration belonged to Baltimore, until Ohio Yearly Meeting was established in 1813.

So rapidly did Friends increase in the Monongahela region of Pennsylvania that a second Monthly Meeting was organized there on the west side of the river in 1793, named Redstone Monthly Meeting. To this, or to its companion Monthly Meeting on the other side of the river, all the early pioneers coming from the east and south carried their removal certificates.[1]

In 1797, Baltimore Yearly Meeting granted these Friends a Quarterly Meeting of their own, named Redstone Quarterly Meeting. According to the Minutes of this Quarterly Meeting there were one hundred and eighty-one families in its membership in 1812, but this was after multitudes of Friends had passed through and gone farther on to Ohio and Indiana.

From all sections of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends joined the migration westward. At first the

[1] See *Minutes* of Redstone M.M. in Park Street Friends' Vault, Baltimore.

movement was small and insignificant. The settled and conservative habits of Pennsylvania and New Jersey members kept them in the old homes and in the old meetings. But from the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a strong set of the tide westward. In the early stages the removal minutes were issued to Redstone and to Westland Monthly Meetings, but after 1805 they were usually for meetings in "the North-western Territory," or specifically for Ohio. Between 1804 and 1806 twenty-two Friends had removal certificates from Salem, New Jersey, to Miami (often spelled "Miamee") Monthly Meeting in Ohio. Burlington Monthly Meeting lost twenty members at about the same time, thirteen of whom settled in Concord Meeting in the North-western Territory. Concord Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania contributed ten members between 1799 and 1802 to swell the group of those who formed the new Concord Meeting beyond the Alleghanies. Uwchlan Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania lost twenty-one of its members through migration to Ohio during the first eight years of the century. It was thus not only opposition to slavery which caused Friends to leave their eastern meetings and travel west to find new homes. It was due partly to the spirit of the times, the desire to enlarge the borders, to possess the new lands, to engage in adventure and to enjoy the freedom and the opportunities that were possible in new settlements.

Another interesting movement of Quaker migration which had begun earlier had carried Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting out toward "the middle western" sections of Pennsylvania. Exeter Monthly Meeting in the neighbourhood of Reading was established in 1737 (at first named Oley). From here there was a steady western movement through Maiden Creek to Pottsville and on towards Muncy. Catawissa Monthly Meeting was established in 1796; Muncy in 1799, and Roaring Creek in 1814. Another line of expansion developed out from Caln Quarterly Meeting in the direction of Lancaster. In the first circle of this outward movement

Sadsbury Monthly Meeting was established in the edge of Lancaster County in 1737; Warrington Monthly Meeting in York County in 1747; Menallen in Adams County in 1780, and Dunning's Creek Monthly Meeting in 1803.

Thomas Scattergood of Philadelphia spent a month in the Monongahela country in 1787 under a weighty religious exercise. He felt, and had felt for three years, a spiritual "concern" for this remote and isolated group of Friends, and he braved the difficulties of early spring travel, "the rugged character of the road," "the poor accommodation for man and horse," the mountains, the ice and snow and the perils of frontier life. When he finally got among these Friends he found himself strangely closed up and the springs of ministry in him almost "dry." Instead of giving us in his account a vivid picture of the new settlements he gives us pages about his own introspections and feelings! "Awoke this morning with fervent desires" that the cause of his continued silence "might be searched out." "I was solemnly engaged in a deep search into my past life." "I am detained in a stripped and tried condition." Meantime we look in vain for a clear account of the country and its people. There are many references to miry roads, rushing streams and rugged mountain scenery. We get one slender picture of a little mid-week meeting at Dixon's, where fifteen or sixteen Friends—men, women and children—are gathered in a rude log-hut, all sitting in silence, while Thomas Scattergood drops tears of resignation. There is evidence of large families of children, and there is an indication that the non-Friends of the region are hungry for spiritual food if only some one would bring them a message of life.[1]

Martha Routh, who spent three weeks on a visit to these Friends in the autumn of 1795, has given us a fuller account, though it is still meagre enough. She finds the taverns even worse than Thomas Scattergood found them, though she gives us a more encouraging

[1] See *Memoirs of Thomas Scattergood*, pp. 24-34.

impression of the people than one gets from him. Here is what the English traveller has to say of her visit:

On third day morning [Aug. 11th, 1795] we were at Bear Garden, the last meeting on that side the Alleganys. In the afternoon we went fourteen miles towards them, had considerable difficulty in crossing Creek-Capon, from great rains; the water ran into our carriage, but we were preserved from any material damage, and got before night to the Tavern where we lodged, a poor dirty place, but the people appeared kindly disposed. I was taken very ill in the night, and got little rest; great was the conflict of flesh and spirit. My faith was tried as to a hair's breadth; and deep were the searchings of heart, whether I was right in going to encompass the rugged mountains sixty miles over, and we then thirty from the foot of them; because other servants had been sent; or whether it was really required of me, in the discharge of my own duty towards God and man.

I believe it would be difficult for any, but exercised travellers in the line of experience, to read my state at that time. How gratefully could I have embraced a peaceful release; but had then to remember, my resigned state of mind a few days before; and why not as willing to accept my life for a prey, in filling up the measure of suffering yet behind? This secret enquiry and tender monition, so instructed, and brought into passiveness, that, as soon as able to rise (my dear companion having administered suitable medicine, &c., which our kind friends at Philadelphia supplied), we journeyed forward; and with some difficulty I bore to ride twelve miles, when, stopping at a Tavern, I went directly to bed; but getting a little quiet rest that night, was somewhat refreshed; and after another day's very rough travel, we got to the foot of the Alleganys, beyond which is a settlement of Friends. The difficulty of travelling in a carriage was beyond description; yet without it I believe I could not have performed the journey. We hoped to have reached the first meeting of Friends by the seventh day evening; but illness preventing, we were twenty-six miles from it, and had to lodge at a miserable dirty tavern; yet the poor people were kind in their way. We rested very little, and great was the sympathy I felt for the inhabitants of such uncultivated places. The man and his wife acknowledged that, though young people, they were old and almost worn out in constitution, by their toil for a livelihood; which appeared to be the case with many.

16th of 8th Month, First day. We rose very early and journeyed on—my strength a little recruited. We got one of our

young men to hasten forward, so as to reach the first meeting of Friends before they separated, and request them to appoint one at four that afternoon.

We reached in due time the meeting called Sandy Hill, three miles from Union Town, and beyond all expectation, a renewal of strength was mercifully vouchsafed to labour, I humbly trust in the ability God giveth; that according to my measure I could acknowledge, that when the Sun of Righteousness is graciously pleased to arise, healing virtue is witnessed both inwardly and outwardly.

We went about three miles on our way after meeting, toward the next; and, being favoured to lie down in peace, and rest well, I was much refreshed; and my mind was humbled in a thankful sense thereof.

We proceeded to the meetings on that side the mountains, as follows: Center, Providence, Sewickly, Tallowfield, Redstone, and Westland.

23rd of 8th Month, First day. In the morning at Pikerun; in the evening we had another meeting appointed at Westland, for Friends and others. At the Monthly Meetings at Redstone and Westland, which were largely attended, and many seemed innocently disposed, to transact the affairs of the Church to the best of their understandings; and my mind felt impressed to encourage them, also to guard against receiving superficial requests to join our religious society; but to endeavour to feel whether real convincement was the ground work, that the Church might not be enlarged with useless members.

On second day morning, we turned our faces towards the Mountains; and being informed of some friendly people on the way, I felt liberty in the Truth, to sit a meeting at nine on third day morning, held in a barn. The number was not large; but I was favoured to feel there were some sincere seekers after Truth, towards whom encouragement went forth, that they might not rest satisfied until they had found in, and for themselves, Christ the true Teacher, and Bishop of souls. Exhortation and counsel were also extended to those less attentive to the inward principle or spirit of Christianity. The people in general seemed well satisfied with the meeting, and appeared to part with us in love; divers of them are called Menonists, or Dunkers. Some of the elders wear their beards, as they say, according to ancient custom, but do not enjoin it as a part of their religion.

We next went to Sandy Creek, the last meeting of Friends in these parts, which was attended by divers not of our Society; and on early sitting down, what the Prophet had to express in

the opening of vision, when he saw Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep having no shepherd, was livingly opened in my view, attended with a motion of life to revive it, and put Friends in a particular manner, upon an examination how far it might be applicable to them: for in the outward it was indeed so, and whether their inward state was not similar.

The Most High was supplicated, that He might be graciously pleased to preserve those, who, not daring to lean to their own understanding, put their trust in Him alone.

After dinner we took leave one of another, and our little company proceeded, lodging that night at a disagreeable Tavern, where we got little sleep; which proved trying to the bodily frame. This is often the case, and may be esteemed in its measure, a part of the sufferings we have to partake of; yet I felt a regard for the landlady, who was kind to us. We arose early and journeyed forward. From the prevalence of fogs, it seemed for some miles like riding in a cloud. On seventh day night we reached a Friend's house at Back Creek, which felt comfortable both to body and mind.[1]

The minutes of the Monthly Meetings in this frontier section of the Society reveal little of human interest. They present for the most part only dry bones to one looking for the real life of these communities of a hundred years ago. We discover that they read Job Scott's writings, but we get almost no other glimpse of their intellectual interests, which must have been very slender. We find that they came in from almost every section of the Quaker field in America, though New England is very sparsely represented. The majority of the membership before 1795 come from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and the Hopewell group of meetings in Virginia.[2]

[1] Martha Routh's *Memoirs*, pp. 135-140.

[2] The following list of well-known Quaker names which appear on the minutes of Redstone Monthly Meeting in the early period of its history—1793–1810—will interest the reader. I have indicated the State from which the persons bearing these names migrated:

Allibone—Maryland.
Antrim—Virginia.
Atherton—Virginia.
Barrett—Virginia.
Bentley—Virginia.
Bogue—North Carolina.
Bonsal—Pennsylvania.
Bundy—North Carolina.
Cadwalader—Pennsylvania.
Carver—North Carolina.
Cattell—Pennsylvania.
Cope—Pennsylvania.
Cox—Virginia.
Darlington—Pennsylvania.
Davis—Maryland.
Dawson—Virginia.
Dickinson—Pennsylvania.
Dillon—Maryland.

They had large families of children, which, in primitive fashion, they endeavoured to educate in their own schools and in their own principles. They put, as all Friends did at this date, great stress on "plainness" and on Quaker peculiarities. In fact, there is more concern manifested for the preservation of "testimonies" than for the formation of life and character, though they did not intend to neglect these fundamental things. They developed very little ministry out of their own group, and were in the main dependent for anything like constructive messages upon itinerant Ministers. But the way was far and the travelling difficult, and few visitors bringing spiritual bread reached them.

Stephen Grellet, who visited these mountain regions in 1824 and who was intensely evangelical, gives us rather a dark picture, perhaps too dark, of their religious condition. He says:

I attended the Meetings of Friends on these mountains, and had some, also, in places where no Friends reside. From place to place I had to proclaim the first principles of Christianity, many having been shaken away from the foundation; the cross of Christ has become an offence to them; they want to devise for themselves a way of salvation more pleasing to their creaturely wisdom and natural understanding; yet there is a remnant in

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Fisher—Pennsylvania.
Gamble—Maryland.
Garwood—New Jersey.
Gause—Pennsylvania.
Gibson—Pennsylvania.
Heston—Virginia.
Heston—Pennsylvania.
Hogue—Virginia.
Hollingsworth—Virginia.
Hunt—Virginia.
Jackson—New Jersey.
Jewell—New Jersey.
Johnson—Pennsylvania.
Kinsey—North Carolina.
Kirk—Pennsylvania.
Leeds—Virginia.
Mason—New Jersey.
McGrew—Pennsylvania.
Moore—Pennsylvania.
Morris—Pennsylvania.
Morrison—Maryland.
Neale—Virginia.
Pennell—Virginia.
Pickering—Virginia.
Randolph—New Jersey.
Roberts—Virginia.
Sharpless—New Jersey.
Shreve—Pennsylvania.
Sidwell—Virginia.
Stanton—North Carolina.
Swayne—Pennsylvania.
Talbott—Maryland.
Taylor—Pennsylvania.
Townsend—Pennsylvania.
Troth—Delaware.
Underwood—Maryland.
Updegraph—Pennsylvania.
Vail—Pennsylvania.
Vickers—Pennsylvania.
Warner—Pennsylvania.
Wickersham—Delaware.
Wilson—Pennsylvania.
Winder—Pennsylvania.
Wood—Virginia.
Yarnall—Pennsylvania.

these parts, who are not ashamed to acknowledge a crucified and risen Lord, as their only hope of salvation.[1]

The minutes of the meetings reveal a very large amount of looseness and immorality in the membership. During the eighteen years between 1793 and 1811, there were no less than *forty* persons disowned for fornication or adultery in the one Monthly Meeting of Redstone. Every one of these cases was investigated by the Overseers, and the charge of immorality was generally admitted. There were few wholesome recreations for the young people. Life was dull and flat, with inadequate interests and activities to occupy the mind or to call forth healthy normal emotions. The result was what seems to us an appalling amount of waywardness and indulgence. It should be added that the moral condition in the Monongahela region appears hardly worse than that which is revealed in the same period in Hopewell Monthly Meeting, or, for that matter, in almost any country meeting from which these pioneer Friends migrated.[2] It is some satisfaction to know that the moral condition of similar country neighbourhoods has vastly improved in the century that has passed since these Friends struggled with the problem and disowned their members as fast as they discovered them in sin. Even more common and frequent are the minutes reporting disownment for marrying outside the Society. In the frontier regions the choice of husband or wife inside the religious group was very limited and restricted, but that fact made no difference and was not regarded as an extenuating circumstance. Whoever married contrary to Discipline was sure to be dealt with and was likely to be disowned. Here is a

[1] *Memoirs of Stephen Grellet*, vol. ii. p. 163.

[2] Minutes like the following are extremely common: 12/10/1787. Westland Preparative Meeting complains of a Friend for "committing fornication as appears from a young woman charging him with being the father of her child, born in an unmarried state, which he doth not deny. He was disowned." The Records of North Carolina for the same period show the same general type of moral conditions as those revealed in Pennsylvania: members used "spirituous liquors to excess," made use of "corrupt language," were prone to "fighting their fellow creatures," committed fornication, violated the Quaker testimony against military training, married "contrary to good order," and did other things which "saints" were not expected to do.

characteristic minute of Westland Monthly Meeting under date of 13th October 1787 :

A Friend for want of taking heed to the dictates of Truth in her own heart let out her affections to a man not of our Society and was married to him by the assistance of a magistrate, for which she was disowned.

Two minutes from Redstone Monthly Meeting add a little more light upon the way these sacred matters were handled :

7/26/1793. A Friend was disowned for keeping company with a woman not of our Society and accomplishing his marriage by the assistance of an hireling Teacher.

4/3/1803. A committee appointed to inspect into a Friend and his wife's clearness with regard to their daughter's marriage, report they had a solid opportunity with them and believe it was a time of weakness with them and that they did not stand upright as the nature of the case required ; yet they did not find so great a breach as to ground a testimony thereon : with which this meeting concurs.[1]

In the eighteen years, between 1793 and 1811, there were in Redstone Monthly Meeting alone one hundred and forty-six cases of marriage contrary to Discipline —generally consisting of the marriage of a member with a non-Friend and involving of necessity the services of a minister—"a priest" or "hireling Teacher," as they call the officiator. Out of this number no less than one hundred and four were disowned for the "offence." The others humbly expressed their sorrow and regret, and were forgiven and reinstated. Few religious bodies could long live and flourish with such a radical surgical method of dealing with its membership.

Here in the beautiful region, beyond the Alleghanies, along both sides of the Monongahela, not far from the place where Braddock met his defeat, where the young George Washington had trained himself for his famous revolutionary campaigns ; and where William Pitt's name was to mark imperishably the gateway to the West, these first emigrants, these forerunners of the great western

[1] These items and the preceding facts are taken from the minutes which are kept in the vault of Park Street Meeting House, Baltimore, Md.

*hegira*, built up the meetings which for many years formed a kind of midway home for a great host of westward-moving pilgrims. Through this Redstone region thousands passed on their way to an ever westward-moving frontier, and here they deposited their certificates of membership while they were creating meetings of their own in their new lands beyond the Ohio.[1]

At first the Monongahela Friends hoped to check the tendency of Friends to go farther beyond. They had migrated from their eastern homes, but they thought that western Pennsylvania was far enough west for Friends to go. In 1793, Redstone Monthly Meeting entered this amusing minute on its records:

> A number of members of our Society with their families are removed down the Ohio River and more likely to go which is a cause of uneasiness with us, therefore we request the advice of the Quarterly Meeting.[2]

Stephen Weeks has given, from original sources, a good account of the manner of travel in the following paragraph:

> The first emigrants to the West went on horseback with pack-horses. They followed the buffalo trails, for where a buffalo could go a horse could go. All the women and the boys above twelve carried guns, and sentries were stationed at certain points, but whether this was a custom of Quakers we are not told. When two-horse wagons and two-wheeled carts came into use a little later it was necessary to double or treble the teams in crossing the mountains; a man was put at each wheel to push; there were from two to four behind for the same purpose and two to chock. These vehicles were usually covered with muslin or linen. Some had no paint, but were pitched with tar instead, while the horses were hitched to them with husk collars and rawhide traces. The movers took with them cooking utensils and provisions; travelled in the day; camped out at night, and went singly or in companies. The women rode in the wagons or on horseback, and these companies were frequently

[1] Sutcliff in his *Travels in North America* reports that eight hundred families of Friends had migrated into Ohio by the year 1806 (*op. cit.* p. 235).

[2] A still earlier plan for migrating farther west or north-west was discovered by the meeting and blocked by drastic action. See *Bulletin Friends' Hist. Soc.* vol viii. No. 3, pp. 100-104.

followed at a short distance in the rear by runaway negroes who took this opportunity to make their way to the land of freedom.[1]

One of the most vivid accounts of the journey from North Carolina to the new western world is that given by Addison Coffin. He made the crossing at a later date than the period of which we are now treating, but the conditions of travel were still much the same and the scenery and circumstances had not much altered. Addison Coffin made the journey on foot, and crossed by what was known as the "Blue Mountain Route," which took the traveller through Cincinnati if he were bound for Indiana. The account referred to is as follows:

I stepped out of my home, with a heart full almost to bursting, with a storm of contending emotions, which I have never been able to describe. My travelling companion was a man of superior ability, kind hearted, thoughtful and prudent, yet withal a jovial, entertaining character. He at once saw my pent-up emotions and kindly, but wisely, diverted me away from myself by initiating me into the art of travelling, and the reality, as well as the wonder and beauty, that lay in the land to which we were going. The first day and night was a sore trial with me; the second day we came in full view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which were so wonderful and new that the intensity of my feelings was somewhat relaxed, and the third day I began to let go of home emotions and enter into the new world of beautiful, wild mountain scenery that lay before and around me. My companion, with his kind discernment, still led me on and out of myself, until he had me wholly absorbed with mountains, the mountaineers and our interesting journey. We took the Blue Mountain route as better suited to horsemen and footmen, than to loaded wagons. In crossing Peter's Mountain we left the road and climbed to the highest summit, from which there is one of the finest mountain scenes in the world. I have been to the place since that eventful trip, I have also been in every state, territory, province and country on the continent, and visited every nation in Europe, and yet can say that scene from Peter's Mountain, in West Virginia, is one of the most beautiful and sublime that I have ever seen. There are many more fearful and terrible, many more sublimely lonely and desolate, but they lack the sublimity of beauty.

We also passed through the gorge of New River, known as

[1] Weeks' *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, pp. 247, 248. It may be taken as certain that Friends used their guns only to shoot game.

New River cliffs, which compares well with anything of the kind in any part of Europe. We crossed the Kanawha River at the falls, and went down on the east side to the celebrated salt works at Molden, twelve miles above Charleston.

Though I have seen many new and interesting places since 1843, that trip has not lost its freshness, nor its events faded from recollection. There were many wayside incidents that were interesting and amusing. It was bright, spring weather, very pleasant for walking, we were stout and healthy, and often indulged in fording creeks and rivers instead of ferrying; we would pull off shoes and stockings, coat and vest, and hold them above water and cross the swift streams, enjoying the cool bath and the excitement of stemming the swift current and stumbling over the sticks and stones on the bottom; a brisk walk in the sun would soon dry our clothes, and we would push on with light hearts and nimble feet. Forty miles per day was our regular day's walk. It was exceedingly interesting to stop over night with the mountaineers, and we often talked until a late hour with them. George Bowman was an old school teacher, with pleasing and winning address, and could charm the children and young folks with his anecdotes and stories, while I was somewhat speculative and knew how to antagonize their opinions and prejudices in a way to get up a discussion or argument. Many times we were not charged for our night's lodging, our host saying that we had more than paid our bills in talk, and invited us to come again. This experience and lesson in talking my way through was not lost on me, but has been improved on up to this date, and I shall ever give George Bowman credit and gratitude for the lesson learned in my first start out in life. We would sometimes become so interested in the grand scenery, the geologic formations, the vast upheavals and displacement of the rock strata that we would forget all about time and distance, and find ourselves at the close of the day without seeming to have been conscious of the day's walk.[1]

Even before the line of march of Quaker migration was started toward Ohio and the north-west, there was a strong current moving over the Blue Mountains into Tennessee. The first important settlement in the Tennessee belt was that at "Lost Creek," which began about 1784. The home meetings disapproved of these early migratory movements and adopted the following curious minute to check them:

[1] Addison Coffin's *Life and Travels*, pp. 50-53.

Taking into consideration the case of Friends removing to the back settlements & the difficulty and danger some have been reduced to and trouble they have brought on Friends thereby, For preventing of which this meeting do give it as our sense & judgment that no Friend do remove and settle out of the limits of a Monthly Meeting without first applying to and having consent of the Monthly and Quarterly Meeting to which they belong: which bounds the Quarterly Meeting is to be the judge of.[1]

Nothing, however, could permanently check the onward-moving current, and the meetings beyond the mountains rapidly grew and multiplied.

Joshua Evans who, it must be remembered, inclines to a pessimistic view of religious conditions, has given us one of the best accounts available of these Tennessee settlements, formed out of emigrants from North Carolina. His visit is dated in February and March, 1797, and his account is as follows:

29th. Set out with a prospect of trying to get to Tennessee, beyond the Allegany mountains, having four Friends from Bush river who had given up to go with, and assist me. With two horses to my light wagon, we travelled about fifty miles the first day, camped in the woods near the head of the river Seluda. Next day we crossed the Blue mountain, and camped again in the woods. The wind blew cold, but I felt inward comfort and support, which was as a staff to lean upon. Next morning we set forward, and in the evening reached a house where we were kindly entertained. This was refreshing to my body; for I had not been much used to lodge in the woods. But I had no cause to murmur, believing my Divine master was near. On the 2nd of 4th month, we began to ascend the Allegany mountains, and met with considerable difficulty at one steep place we had to descend with the carriage. In the evening lay in the woods. After passing over many towering mountains, we at length came to a dismal place, called Laurel Swamp, where much difficulty attended our getting through, among dangerous roots, and over large logs, rocks, &c., and having to go along, sometimes in and again out of a difficult stony creek; by which means the tongue of my wagon was broken in this Laurel desert. But having brought tools with us we put in another tongue, and succeeded at length in getting through this dreary part of the journey; for

[1] Quoted from Weeks, p. 252.

which favour, all that is living within me, did reverence and humbly adore the Lord, my preserver, for he alone is worthy of all honour and praise forever.

On the 4th of 4th month, after going about thirty miles, we arrived at New Hope, in the Tennessee country; and the next day were at their fourth-day meeting of Friends, where a marriage was accomplished. We then travelled about sixty miles, a part of the road being very bad, to Lost Creek, where a number of our Friends are settled. We had two meetings with them, and I believe it was to the honour of Truth, many hearts being tendered.—Though in my travels and trials, I have found great need of having my patience renewed, and have felt myself as a poor pilgrim, yet have no cause to murmur; for the Lord is kind to me.

10th. Travelling about eighteen miles, I had a meeting with a few Friends at Grassy Valley, beyond Holstein river; and in the evening, another opportunity with Friends only, to good satisfaction. I then returned to Lost Creek, with the reward of peace, and had another meeting there. Then, feeling clear of these parts, we travelled back to New Hope, and attended another meeting there, which I thought large and solid. But I thought this a poor place for Friends; so much of the worldly spirit prevails that it hinders the growth of Truth, and chokes the good seed. I was grieved at the low state of religion, too many appearing to content themselves with an empty form without substance.

22nd. We passed on to a place called Chestnut Creek, on the Blue Ridge, where were a few Friends, with whom we had a comfortable meeting next day. My condition was the feeling of a heavy heart; for the general cry of the people seems to be for more land, but content with little religion. Thus, among Friends in the mountains of the upper part of Virginia, I fear it is a low time, and too little attention paid to the nature and ground-work of true religion.[1]

Stephen Grellet, who was to be in his mature life one of the greatest Quaker travellers of the nineteenth century and one of the most powerful Ministers the Society ever produced, visited, while still only twenty-six years of age, these remote pioneer Friends, and he has left a very vivid account of his journey, an account which can hardly be paralleled for its present-day interest. It is as follows:

[1] *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. x. pp. 158-161.

Providing ourselves with bread for some days, we set off for Tennessee. We met with many difficulties on that journey through a mountainous, unsettled country, having deep waters to ford, there being neither bridges nor ferries over them. Ours was probably the first carriage that had travelled that road. It was well we had taken a little bread and corn with us, which we had to use sparingly, so that a couple of dry cakes and water served me the whole day, and the horses ate young twigs and leaves; for very little grass was to be found. While encamping during the night, which we did several times, we kept up a good fire to protect us from the panthers, bears, and wolves. The latter were numerous. Sometimes it seemed as if a hundred of them were howling at once round about us. We feared at times lest our horses, frightened with their noise, should get away from us, but it seemed as if the more danger they apprehended, the nearer they kept to us. I was, however, more in fear of venomous snakes than of wolves. Rattlesnakes and copperheads were numerous there, as in most of those new countries. They would even come into the cabins, through the openings between the logs, or in the floors. But through adorable mercy I have never been hurt by any of them, though I have frequently been in close contact with them.

We travelled slowly on account of the difficulty of the roads; sometimes they were so steep, that with our empty carriage, the horses could only get a few steps forward at once. Frequently, indeed, we had to open a road by cutting down the trees and removing them out of the way. But, notwithstanding the fatigue, we were favoured with good health, and enjoyed the beauty and grandeur of the scenery we often had before us, whilst passing through some of those dense forests, covered with those old lofty trees, which appeared like "the cedars of Lebanon that the Lord has planted." We once encamped under the *painted rock*, by the French Broad river. It may be called one of the wonders of nature. There the Indians used to hold their councils.

We visited the various meetings composing the Quarterly Meeting in that State, where we were often comforted with some valuable, well-concerned Friends, who are engaged both by example and precept, to manifest their interest for the promotion of the kingdom of the dear Redeemer, and also to train up their offspring in a religious life and conversation; yet in these parts, as in many others, I found a great deficiency in this respect, which introduced me often into deep exercise and secret mourning. Through almost every part of the Carolinas and Tennessee, Friends, as well as the people at large, undergo many privations and hardships. The education of the young people is much

neglected, there being few or no schools, so that not many children, or even parents can read. Yet among such I found some lively, sound Ministers of the Gospel. The Lord had instructed them by his Spirit, and blessed the little they had known of Gospel truths. The state of religion among the inhabitants at large was very low. A loose, libertine spirit appeared, in several places, like a thick cloud to cover the minds of many of the people; yet I found some serious persons among them, with whom we had refreshing meetings. We visited also some of the Indians with some satisfaction.[1]

William Williams, who moved from North Carolina to Lost Creek in his early youth and who became one of the spiritual leaders among the pioneer Friends of this period, reports in his *Journal* that he visited "upwards of fifty families" in Lost Creek Monthly Meeting in 1805.[2] Lost Creek Quarterly Meeting was established by North Carolina Yearly Meeting in 1802, including, then or later, groups of Friends and meetings at Lost Creek, New Hope, Grassy Valley, Bethel, Canada Creek, Flat Creek, Fountain Springs, Hickory Creek, Hickory Valley, and Lick Creek, and having in its membership many families whose names have since become famous in Quaker annals.

Thomas Beales was the first Friend to break the way from North Carolina to Ohio, and he has the distinction of being the first emigrant to settle in Ohio.[3] He discovered the possibilities of the new territory, and he acquired his appetite for travel and adventure as a result of a journey to visit the Indians of the north-west. He passed through Virginia in the autumn of 1777, with William Robinson as companion, "under proper qualifications and resignation of mind" for their arduous undertaking; "leaving all and at the risk of their lives engaging in this service, from a sense of duty and universal love to mankind."[4] Thomas Beales was devoted to the cause of the Indians, and intended at this time to "spend the greater part of his days" among

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 66-69.

[2] *Journal* (Cincinnati, 1839), p. 18.

[3] This statement rests on the authority of Levi Coffin. See his *Reminiscences* (Cincinnati, 1880), p. 10.

[4] From a Journal of one of the "Quaker Exiles" in Virginia during the Revolutionary War in Gilpin's *Virginia Exiles* (Phila., 1848), p. 163.

them. He was absent on this religious visit about a year, and, on his return home, he proposed to move to the Ohio River in order that he might be within easy reach of the Delaware Indians. His Quarterly Meeting (Western, in North Carolina) did not feel that the time had yet come for his removal, and kept him waiting for some time, though he was allowed in 1780 to go west to make further investigation. Finally, some time before 1782, he moved with his family and several other families into the Ohio region, where he died in 1801.[1] The trail was now well blazed, and there were many from this time on who found it the right path for their feet. I have already referred at the opening of this chapter to the migration from Trent River, North Carolina, which occurred in 1800, the proposal for it being laid before Contentnea Quarterly Meeting, "the 9th of 10th month," 1799. "The matter and its circumstances" were weightily considered in the Quarterly Meeting, which "concluded to leave Friends at their liberty to proceed therein, as way might be opened for them." Their Monthly Meeting gave them certificates of membership to be conveyed to the Monthly Meeting nearest their place of settlement, and thereupon Trent Monthly Meeting "solemnly and finally adjourned or concluded," and delivered up its Records to the Quarterly Meeting.[2] These Friends removed first to the Monongahela settlement, from which they planned their permanent homes in Ohio, and deposited their certificates with Redstone Monthly Meeting. The Records of this meeting on the matter, under date 2nd June 1800, are such interesting documents historically that I give them in full as follows:

The minutes and proceedings of a Monthly Meeting on Trent River in Jones County, North Carolina, relative to Friends moving within the verge of this Meeting were produced and read from which the following is abstracted being what appears needful to insert in our minutes, viz.:

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[1] See Weeks' *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, pp. 254, 255.

[2] See "A Brief Account," in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. pp. 220-222. The Records of Contentnea Monthly and Quarterly Meetings are kept in the vault of Guilford College Library.

To the Quarterly Meeting of Friends at Redstone in Pennsylvania.

Dear Friends,—At our Monthly Meeting of Friends held on Trent River, in Jones County, North Carolina, the 7th of the 9th month, 1799, the weighty subject of the members of this meeting nearly all removing away within the limits of Redstone Quarterly Meeting, so as it would break up this Monthly Meeting, having been for some time on our minds, until nearly all have concluded to move, if they can consistant with good order, coming before this meeting which being of so great consequence it is refered for further consideration till next Monthly Meeting. In a Monthly Meeting held 5th of 10th month, 1799: The weighty subject of Friends moving from Trent over the Ohio so generally in a united body as to break up this Monthly Meeting being opened by our last month's minutes refering to this for consideration; and as it appears that nearly all the members of men's and women's meetings having had the matter in contemplation some time and several weighty conferences in preceding Monthly Meetings and it being our united belief that it would be best for Friends generally to move as above said and under a renewed consideration thereof at this time we unanimously agree that as far as we can discover in the Light we believe our proceedings are consistant with the leadings of Truth so that it appears likely for this meeting to come to an end and that it may be done orderly it is the mind of Friends here that there ought to be certificates of conveyance of rights signed by this meeting for every member that expects to move with the time of their births inserted in them as many as are recorded here especially children's births, to the nearest Monthly Meeting to which they go which concern (as appears by the said minute) being laid before the Quarterly Meeting at Contentney [*sic*] the 19th of the 10th month was united with so far as to leave Friends at liberty to proceed as way might open. And continuing to be a subject of weighty deliberation until in the First month 1800 when the necessary preparation being made, the said Monthly Meeting solemnly and finally adjourned and resigned their records and privilege of holding a Monthly Meeting to the aforesaid Quarterly Meeting held the 18th of the said month as is certified by an endorsement from that meeting signed by the clerk thereof in Carteret County North Carolina.

These Friends have now arrived and are sojourners in the vicinity of this meeting and this being a subject of such magnitude and importance this meeting appoints David Grave, William Hilles, and others to confer with them and give such assistance and aid as may be necessary to procure a settlement of Friends

in the Territory North West of Ohio and report to next Monthly Meeting.

9/1/1800. The Committee appointed report they have had several conferences with Friends from North Carolina gave such advice and counsel necessary and few of their number being selected accompanied some of them in seeking a place for settlement as recommended last meeting since which an office has been opened for the sale of land there and Friends here have settled in the vicinity of Wheeling and Short Creek, which is satisfactory to this meeting.[1]

They settled along the Short Creek, a few miles west of the Ohio River, forming the nucleus of meetings at Plymouth and Concord. They were given tracts of land, containing six hundred and forty acres each. It was beautiful rolling country, and it seemed wonderfully fertile and productive to the farmers who had been used to barren soil.[2]

In 1802, Borden Stanton wrote his interesting narrative, referred to in the opening of this chapter, to a group of Friends who were proposing to migrate from Wrightsborough, Georgia, to Ohio. This Letter is the clearest account which we possess of the reasons that led to the removal of Friends, of the method of procedure, of the difficulties to be encountered and of the joyous prospect at the end of the long journey. I give the Letter herewith, with some abbreviations:

DEAR FRIENDS,—Having understood by William Patten and William Hogan from your parts, that a number among you have had some thoughts and turnings of mind respecting a removal to this country; and, as I make no doubt, you have had much struggling and many reasonings about the propriety of it; and also, considering the undertaking as a very arduous one, that you have been almost ready at times to be discouraged and faint in your minds: under a sense of which, I have felt a near sympathy with you. As it has been the lot of a number of us to undertake the work a little before you, I thought a true statement (for your information) of some of our strugglings and reasonings concerning the propriety of our moving;—also of our

[1] Taken from the *Minutes* of Redstone M.M.

[2] See *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. pp. 219 and 222. Joshua Evans has much to say of the barrenness of the soil along Trent River. See *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. x. pp. 147, 148.

progress on the way, and the extension of heavenly regard to us-ward; together with the progress of Friends, both temporally and spiritually, since we have got here,—might afford strength and encouragement to you in the arduous task you have in prospect.

I may begin thus, and say that for several years Friends had some distant view of moving out of that oppressive part of the land, but did not know where until the year 1799; when we had an acceptable visit from some travelling Friends of the western part of Pennsylvania. They thought proper to propose to Friends for consideration whether it would not be agreeable to best wisdom for us unitedly to remove north-west of the Ohio river,—to a place where there were no slaves held, being a free country. This proposal made a deep impression on our minds: and it seemed as if they were messengers sent to call us out, as it were from Egyptian darkness (for indeed it seemed as if the land groaned under oppression) into the marvellous light of the glory of God.

Nevertheless, although we had had a prospect of something of the kind, it was at first very crossing to my natural inclination; being well settled as to the outward. So I strove against the thoughts of moving for a considerable time; yet the view would often arise, that it was in accordance with pure wisdom for Friends to leave that part of the land. But I had often to turn the fleece, as Gideon did, and to ask counsel of the Lord, being desirous to be rightly directed by him: more especially, as it seemed likely to break up our Monthly Meeting, which I had reason to believe was set up in the wisdom of Truth. Thus, I was concerned many times to weigh the matter as in the balance of the sanctuary; till, at length, I considered that there was no prospect of our number being increased by convincement, on account of the oppression that abounded in that land. I also thought I saw in the light, that the minds of the people generally were too much outward, so that "there was no room in the inn" of the heart for much religious impression; being filled with other guests: and notwithstanding they have been visited with line upon line and precept upon precept, yet they remain in too much hardness of heart.

Under a view of these things, I was made sensible, beyond doubting, that it was in the ordering of wisdom for us to remove; and that the Lord was opening a way for our enlargement, if found worthy.—Friends generally feeling something of the same, there were three of them who went to view the country, and one worthy public Friend. They travelled on till they came to this part of the western country, where they were stopped in their

minds, believing it was the place for Friends to settle. So they returned back, and informed us of the same in a solemn meeting; in which *dear Joseph Dew, the public Friend, intimated that he saw the seed of God sown in abundance, which extended far north-westward. This information, in the way it was delivered to us, much tendered our spirits, and strengthened us in the belief that it was right. So we undertook the work, and found the Lord to be a present helper in every needful time, as he was sought unto; yea, to be as "the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night": and thus we were led safely along until we arrived here.*

The first of us moved west of the Ohio in the 9th month, 1800; and none of us had a house at our command to meet in to worship the Almighty Being. So we met in the woods, until houses were built, which was but a short time. In less than one year, Friends so increased that two preparative meetings were settled; and in last 12th month, a Monthly Meeting, called Concord, also was opened, which is now large. Another preparative meeting is requested, and also another first and week-day meeting. Four are already granted in the territory, and three meeting-houses are built. Way appears to be opening for another Monthly Meeting; and I think, a Quarterly Meeting.

Having intimated a little of the progress of Friends in a religious line, I may say that as to the outward we have been sufficiently provided for, though in a new country. Friends are settling fast, and seem, I hope, likely to do well. Under a sense of these things, and of the many favours the Lord has conferred on us, I have been ready, and do at times cry out, "Marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! just and true are all thy ways."[1]

Zachariah Dicks was a moving influence in some, perhaps in many, of the southern meetings. He was a powerful rhapsodical preacher, believed in his day to have prophetic insight in an unusual degree. He moved to North Carolina from Warrington Monthly Meeting, Pennsylvania, about 1755, when Quaker migration went southward, settled there and became a member of New Garden Monthly Meeting. He travelled extensively afterwards in the ministry, and on one of his itinerant journeys in 1803 he went through the meetings of South Carolina and Georgia. He had been profoundly stirred by the recent massacres in San Domingo and he pre-

[1] *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. xii. pp. 216-219.

dicted similar scenes and occurrences in the Carolinas. He warned Friends to come out of slavery and separate themselves absolutely from it, and from all implication in its evils and consequences. In the Bush River Meeting, South Carolina, he broke forth into prophecy and pictured the desolate future condition. With impressive and thrilling voice, he cried, "O Bush River! Bush River! How hath thy beauty faded. Gloom and darkness have eclipsed thy day!" His words produced an immense sensation and swept the large Quaker community as a veritable message from above. The result which followed was a widespread migration, so inclusive of the membership that it practically ended Quakerism in the Bush River region. The Friends in many instances sold their farms for half their value, loaded their indispensable goods on wagons, and started for the Canaan beyond the mountains. From this interesting old meeting came the families of Coate, Jay, Jenkins, Furnas, Evans, Wright, Brooks, Miles, Pugh, Mills, Coppock, Reagan, Pearson, Spray, Teague, Hollingsworth, Kirk and many others.

Ten years before this migration of the meeting, two Bush River Friends, Abijah O'Neall and Samuel Kelly, had bought a large tract of military land in Warren County, Ohio, near the present town of Waynesville. Abijah O'Neall visited this Ohio purchase in 1799, and on his return requested a removal certificate of his Monthly Meeting. The request was, at that period of calm, before the visiting "prophet" had aroused the migrating fervour, strongly opposed by the meeting, and much disapproval was expressed to the project of its member to move off into the wilderness! Less than ten years later the sober, staid meeting as a body was carried off its feet and set moving westward, partly by the voice of a "prophet" and partly, no doubt, by changed conditions.[1] Abijah O'Neall was, however, not discouraged by the attitude of his meeting toward removal, for in the spring of 1800 he went out to occupy the great tract which he and Samuel

[1] This account has drawn upon O'Neall's *Annals of Newberry*, S.C., pp. 30-40.

Kelly had bought in Ohio. It consisted of 3310⅔ acres. A part of this purchase lay on the east side of the Little Miami River, opposite the present town of Waynesville. The Bush River Friends paid sixty-six and one half cents per acre for it! In 1834, Rhoda M. Coffin's father, John Johnson, bought a farm, called "Diamond Hill," from this O'Neall tract and paid five thousand dollars for it.[1]

The Bush River Monthly Meeting records for Eighth Month 1802 contain this minute:

> The Friends removed to the Miami River, on the northwest side of the Ohio River, request their certificates for themselves and their families to Westland Monthly Meeting in Washington county, Pennsylvania, to convey their right of membership there.[2]

Requests for certificates came thick and fast from 1803 onwards, and the meeting steadily waned away and the Records grow thin and meagre.

With the opening of the century the flood of pilgrims was well under way, moving for the first ten or twelve years toward the main objective terminus in Ohio. The drain upon the southern meetings was very serious, and in many cases it brought feebleness and even death to many meetings which had had a famous history and a remarkable influence. But what was loss to the old region was gain to the new, and on the whole there can be no doubt that the migration brought increase of life and real expansion, though it involved considerable tragedy for those who were left behind to nurse the dwindling meetings and to keep the fire burning on the desolate hearths. Beyond the Ohio, each year saw new settlements opened and old ones enlarged.

Concord Monthly Meeting was the first one to be organized beyond the Ohio, and was established by Redstone Quarterly Meeting, 7th December 1801. This meeting soon expanded and had to be divided into two

[1] *Reminiscences of Rhoda M. Coffin*, pp. 20-24.

[2] The certificate includes Samuel and Hannah Kelly and children; Abijah and Anne O'Neall and children; Robert and Sarah Kelly and children; Alexander and Eunice Mills; Mary Peaty and Anne Horner. Taken from the Records in the Guilford College vault.

Monthly Meetings, the new one being called Short Creek. It was organized by action of Redstone Quarterly Meeting in 1804, with Nathan Updegraph as clerk. Meantime the stream had been going farther west and settlements of Friends were forming along the fertile banks of the Miami River—both Great and Little Miami. So rapidly did this drift toward western Ohio grow in volume that Miami Monthly Meeting was set off by Redstone Quarterly Meeting, 13th October 1803. Miami Monthly Meeting, with the central settlement at Waynesville, Ohio, became the great Mecca of Quaker migration between 1803 and 1807. No less than eighteen hundred and twenty-six removal certificates of Friends were received by that Monthly Meeting in that four year period. Eight hundred and ten of this number came from Bush River and Cane Creek Meetings in South Carolina and from Wrightsborough, Georgia. Forty-five came from six Monthly Meetings in Pennsylvania, and sixty-nine came from seven Monthly Meetings in New Jersey.[1] Middletown Monthly Meeting was also set up in 1803 and Salem followed in 1805. From this time on there were so many new Monthly Meetings formed in Ohio that we cannot follow them in detail.

In 1805 Concord and Short Creek Monthly Meetings requested liberty of Redstone Quarterly Meeting to hold a Quarterly Meeting of their own. In 1806 this request was granted, the Quarterly Meeting being named Short Creek Quarterly Meeting and being subordinate to Baltimore Yearly Meeting. In 1807 Salem and Middletown Monthly Meetings were granted the privilege of holding a Quarterly Meeting named Salem Quarterly Meeting, and the same year Miami and Centre Meetings were granted the privilege of holding a Quarterly Meeting, called Miami Quarterly Meeting. In 1810 a request was made by Friends on the west side of Great Miami River, composed of West Branch, White Water and Elk, to have the privilege granted them of holding a Quarterly Meeting. This was granted in 1812 and the meeting was called

[1] See Article by Eli Jay in *White Water Centennial*, pp. 32, 33.

West Branch Quarterly Meeting. At a later date West Branch and White Water became separate Quarterly Meetings.

At Baltimore Yearly Meeting held in 1811, the important subject of a division of the Yearly Meeting was discussed and referred to next Yearly Meeting.

At Baltimore Yearly Meeting held in 1812, the subject of creating a new Yearly Meeting beyond the Alleghanies was seriously considered and referred to a large committee of Friends. This committee brought in the following report, which the Yearly Meeting approved and adopted:

> The committee appointed to unite with women Friends, in the further consideration of the important subject of a Yearly Meeting, to be held in the state of Ohio, Report that we have several times met, and have had the company of several Brethren of the Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and Virginia, believing in our deliberations, we have been favoured with a good degree of Solemnity, under which we were free to propose that the Quarterly Meetings west of the Alleghany mountains, within the verge of this Yearly Meeting, be at full liberty to convene together at Short Creek on the third first-day in the 8th month next, in the capacity of a Yearly Meeting, agreeable to their prospect and desire as expressed in their appeal to this meeting last year.[1]

In accordance with this action "Ohio Yearly Meeting for the State of Ohio, Indiana Territory and the adjacent parts of Pennsylvania and Virginia" opened its first session, at Short Creek, Ohio, "the 14th of Eighth month, 1813," with Hatton Howard as clerk and Isaac Wilson assistant clerk.[2]

John Hunt, a weighty Friend of this period of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, who had visited Ohio on a religious mission in 1804, writes with enthusiasm of the growth and expansion which appeared in 1813. He says:

> Now they have five Quarterly Meetings and this fall they are to hold a Yearly Meeting at Short Creek, Ohio. Seldom, if ever, was there known a more rapid settlement, far and wide

[1] From the *Minutes* of Balt. Y.M. for 1812.

[2] The 14th was the day before "the third First day" in August.

through that western country for several hundreds of miles; and a vast number of Friends are settled there. Many large towns and numerous villages are built, where but a few years ago the country was inhabited by the Indians, or was a vast howling wilderness inhabited by wolves, bears, wild beasts and birds.[1]

By the year 1820 there were probably not less than twenty thousand Friends west of the Alleghany Mountains, and the number went on growing rapidly for still many more years. They had come from every part of the existing Quaker world. The south had furnished by far the largest proportion of the western membership, but Pennsylvania and New Jersey (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) had made a large contribution to the new meetings. We should perhaps be not far from the truth if we put one quarter of the whole number, *i.e.* five thousand, to the account of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Conditions of life were of course rough and hard in the early period. The forests had to be cleared, almost all the food for the family had to be got off the farm, and all the cloth had to be made from the raw home-grown wool and flax, so that everybody worked, from the oldest to the youngest, and there was little leisure for relaxation or for culture. But from their first arrival in the new world beyond the Ohio, these Friends began planning for the right education of their children, and all the meeting records reveal a deep concern for good schools. The settlers themselves were soon adjusted to their pioneer conditions, and enjoyed the bracing tasks of hewing out their homes and creating the new civilization of their growing free State, but their visitors from the old and more finished communities found life somewhat hard. They always comment upon the difficult roads over which they travel, their hair-breadth escapes and their rugged fare. We come across entries like this in the diaries of itinerant Ministers:

Attended meeting in a meeting-house with no glass windows nor were there any in the house where we dined.

[1] "John Hunt's Journal" in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. x. p. 353.

Two young men went on foot as our guides and we rode twenty-five miles.

After we had travelled sixteen miles, we had to put up at an extremely dirty cabin, it being after night [*sic*] when we arrived and no candle to be seen.

We attended Lee's Creek meeting [about the end of November], the house being very open and cold with no fire.[1]

The seasoned and deeply spiritual Friends who came on their religious visits did not always find the new meetings held in model fashion. William Williams, who was well acquainted with border life, was impressed with the feeling that the business of Miami Monthly Meeting in 1807 was transacted "too much in the strength and wisdom of man," and "in the letter which never fails to kill the pure life and which *leads into warm debates*." At Turtle Creek he discovered "a back-sliding in some" who were present. They had become, he thinks, "captivated with the spirit of the world" and had "departed from the truth." In Centre Monthly Meeting he found "lifeless and unsanctified ministry." There seemed to be "an opposing spirit which obstructed the circulation of the gospel"—"we had to leave the place in a state of mourning."[2]

As soon as we turn to the ancient records of any of these meetings we see that the members did not leave all their "old Adam" behind, when they crossed the Alleghanies and the Ohio. Their native instincts and old habits came along with them in some cases as surely as did their old furniture. If we take a sample meeting, as for instance Miami Monthly Meeting, we see revealed much the same every-day conditions of life that prevailed in the old settled meetings. Many of the members in these early days were unchaste and loose in moral habits. During the years from 1807 to 1823—a period of sixteen years—ten Friends were disowned in this one Monthly Meeting for fornication or adultery. Other members are dealt with or disowned for "drinking," for "fighting," for

[1] These passages are taken from Hannah Yarnall's Diary in *Friends' Miscellany*, vol. x. pp. 233-236.

[2] *Journal*, pp. 24-26.

"using bad language," for "threatening a man with a gun," for "using profane words," for "dancing," for "failing to settle contracts," for "spreading slanderous reports," for "bearing false-witness," sometimes for trivial offences, such as "subscribing to a singing school." The overwhelming number of delinquents is made up of those who violate the Discipline in reference to marriage. From 1804 to 1828, forty-four members of Miami Monthly Meeting were disowned for marrying contrary to Discipline, while twenty-four others during the same period were dealt with for the same cause, and who made "satisfaction to the meeting," by way of apologies and regrets. The meeting was very severe upon all who violated the peace "testimony," and many were disowned for "training with the militia," or for "paying muster fines," or for "furnishing a substitute to serve in the militia." It is at least clear that the Discipline was as "sacred" west of the Ohio as it was farther east, and those who were concerned for Zion kept sternly at the business of winnowing the chaff from the wheat. We wonder now how these Friends got on with so little constructive ministry and with so few opportunities to enlarge their vision and their scope of life and outlook. They had grown up with their inherited Quakerism and it had become a subconscious part of their lives. The traditional view of the inner Light, which they held in an implicit and unanalyzed way, filled an enormous place in their lives and formed the regulative basis of all religion and morality, while they used the familiar Scripture texts in a solemn, impressive fashion, giving them a derived allegorical significance which carried weight then, but which would leave our generation now untouched and unfed. There was an obvious lack of positive content to their faith, and they failed to a large extent to grasp their truth in terms which could be transmitted and passed on to their successors. It worked well so long as it was unchallenged and not forced to meet maturing intellectual conceptions. So long as they remained content with Quietism and dwelt in silence, and followed the deep grooves of habit in their thought-processes, in their

practices and in their meeting procedure, they got on well. When they were called upon to stand and deliver their positive constructive message (or when the time came to readjust in order to meet a new environment of expanding thought) then they were put to a hard test, and they could not deal with fresh formulation of truth without splitting into separations and divisions and branches, as we shall see.

One largely gifted Friend settled in the limits of Miami Meeting in 1805. This was Joseph Cloud, who moved thither from Cane Creek, North Carolina. He had been on a religious visit to Great Britain and he had exercised a far-reaching influence in North Carolina. He was, according to the testimony of his Friends, a man of good natural abilities though with slight school education. He showed a depth of religious experience and he was an able Minister of the gospel, preaching in demonstration and power. He died in 1816.

William Forster of Great Britain, one of the most beautiful souls the Society has produced and one of the most distinguished that up to this time had visited the state, bestowed much labour upon Friends in Ohio in 1821. He has left these interesting impressions of his visit:

Money in these parts is so scarce that there are not many Friends who would think they could spare even a few cents for the purchase of a child's book. There is a school-house attached to almost every meeting; but in many places, in consequence of the difficulty of the times, they have no master. I find that First-day schools have been attempted in almost every meeting within the compass of some of the Monthly Meetings; but in many instances I fear they have not been judiciously conducted; boys and girls, and young men and young women, all assemble together, and go home in companies through the woods in the evening. I endeavour to do what I can to induce Friends to believe that, under proper regulations, and the superintendence of steady and watchful friends, they might be held to great advantage, and that it would afford the opportunity of a little learning to some poor children who can hardly be expected to obtain it in any other way. Such schools would have the great advantage of providing suitable employ for young people on

First-day afternoons, instead of their rambling about the woods, or spending their time in gossiping and idle visiting; and it might have the happy effect of bringing the young people into habits of order and quietness. Oh! what a field is here for enlightened and well-concerned Friends. The members of our Society are more numerous than I expected to find them. In some places it seems as if the whole of the settlement were in profession with them, so that they have the opportunity of adopting and enforcing regulations to a degree that would be impracticable with us.[1]

Three years later Stephen Grellet came through the Ohio meetings and was deeply impressed with what seemed to him the "inroads of anti-christian doctrine."

"Some of their meetings in this new country," he writes in 1824, "are very large, many join Friends by *convincement*, as they say; but very few indeed do I find who, if convinced of the Truth, are converted to it. I much fear, besides, that there are those among them who have never known what Truth is. It is a lamentable fact that many of these so-called *convinced* members are among those who are carried away by the spirit of infidelity."[2]

I have so far spoken of the Miami region of Ohio as though *it* were the western terminus of the migration. That was by no means the fact. Very early in the nineteenth century the western boundary of Ohio was passed and the tide of emigrants crossed over into Indiana and settled along its creeks as they had done in Ohio. David Hoover of Randolph County, North Carolina, was one of the first Friends to cross into Indiana. His family had migrated, with all their goods loaded in a wagon, from North Carolina to the North-west Territory in 1802. They encamped during the first winter in the woods along the Stillwater River, about twelve miles north of Dayton, but the little party of pilgrims was not quite satisfied with any locality which they "prospected" and ventured upon. Finally, in the spring of 1806, David Hoover and four others boldly struck out to make fresh discoveries in the unbroken

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 330, 331. [2] *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 165.

wilderness.[1] Charles F. Coffin, who was for many years the most influential Friend in Richmond, and who has recently (in 1916) been called to his heavenly home at a very advanced age, wrote in 1858 for *Friends' Review* an excellent account of this expedition. The account is so vivid and concrete that I shall embody a long extract from it:

About the last of the 2nd month, 1806, four young men, who were natives of North Carolina, but had been residing for a short time in Ohio, and who were either members of the Society of Friends, or closely connected with it, searching for a home in this new country, started upon a section line,—the country having been a short time previously surveyed,—eight or ten miles north of Dayton, Ohio, and pursuing it westward, about thirty miles through unbroken woods, came to the country upon the White Water River, a short distance above where Richmond now stands. It was then in its primeval untrodden state, covered with a dense forest of valuable timber, mostly beech and sugar. The undergrowth was mostly spice-wood. Along the streams, and upon some of the bluff points, there were some dense thickets, and where the ground was a little open, it was in many places covered with a species of nettle, so that it was almost impossible, in summer time, for man or horse to pass through it. The virgin soil was very loose and rich, so that a horse could be tracked for some weeks after passing over it. The streams of water appeared smaller than they now do, and their margins and the gravel beds adjoining them were covered with thick, coarse grass, sufficiently high in many places to conceal a horse. Of wild animals, a few bears were found, and a large number of wolves, deer, and smaller animals, such as wild cats, raccoons, foxes, &c. Of birds—pigeons were found in incredible numbers; wild turkeys and geese were abundant; but very few, if any, of the varieties of birds, which are now found in this country, were then seen.

From the point where these young men first struck the White Water, they passed down it a few miles, and although no Indians were permanently located in the vicinity, they met two Indian trappers where the city of Richmond now stands, who appeared friendly, and by whom they learned that a white man lived three miles down the stream. They proceeded to his house, and found, in that vicinity, three or four families who had recently

[1] I have been following David Hoover's own narrative as given in his *Memoirs*, edited by Isaac H. Julian (Richmond, Ind., 1857).

emigrated from Kentucky, with which exception there were very few, if any settlers within twenty miles. From thence they returned through the woods to their homes in Ohio.[1]

In August of that same year, several Friends migrated to the White Water region and formed a settlement there, among whom was Jeremiah Cox, a solid and consistent Friend, who did much to advance the growth of the little meeting now formed in Indiana.[2]

In the autumn of this year, John Simpson, a Minister from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, paid a religious visit to the new settlers along the White Water, and was thus probably the first itinerant Minister to carry a spiritual message to Indiana. He preached "a long sermon to few hearers," in Jeremiah Cox's cabin, and he appears to have *reached the life* in the hearts of his listeners. One of the little congregation said many years afterwards: "I doubt whether as a speaker or as a fatherly good man, he has had many to excel him since that date"; and another of the early pioneers, remembering the occasion in his later life, remarked: "My heart melted down under his fatherly conversation."[3] Friend Simpson, who brought so much refreshment to the little band of about twenty settlers, was at this time on a visit to the Shawnee Indians, and he went on from the White Water to have an interview with the famous chief, Tecumseh.

One of the earliest pictures which we get of the White Water settlement, and that slight enough, is the one given us in William Williams's *Journal*, under date of 15th July 1807. He came from Lost Creek, Tennessee, and, as is usual with him, he sees the imperfections in the religious condition of the little group. He says:

Rode to White Water, to the house of Jeremiah Cox, in the territory of Indiana. This was a new settlement, where a few families of Friends who live together have requested a meeting: had a meeting there next day. This was a time of deep travail

[1] *Friends' Review*, vol. xi. pp. 506, 507.

[2] Jeremiah Cox and John Smith are the reputed founders of Richmond. John Smith's removal certificate was received by Miami Monthly Meeting in 1804 and Jeremiah Cox's in 1806.

[3] Taken from Charles F. Coffin's article.

of soul, and large gospel service: some in this place being too whole in their own minds to know that they have need of a physician to heal them.[1]

About this time religious meetings began to be held regularly, for in September of 1807, what was then called "an indulged meeting" was granted to these Friends by West Branch Monthly Meeting in Ohio, in the "verge" of which, to use the ancient phrase, these pioneers resided. There were at this time about eighty-four Friends scattered about in this region, and thirty-four persons attended the first meeting after the "indulgence" was granted.

The early meetings were held in Jeremiah Cox's cabin, near what is now the corner of Seventh and Vine Streets in Richmond, but this was adequate as an assembling place only for a short time. In 1808 the first meeting-house was built. It was 24 feet square and was made of logs. This little house, with some additions which were made to it, served the community until 1821.

The first Monthly Meeting in the Indiana settlement was held 30th September 1809, being established by Miami Quarterly Meeting and being subordinate, as all the other western meetings then were, to Baltimore Yearly Meeting. By the time the Monthly Meeting began there were already two hundred and sixty-five Friends in the community.[2] The migration which was so rapid during these first two years went forward with leaps and bounds. White Water Monthly Meeting now became a new "clearing-house" for settlers going farther west and breaking new territory, the vast majority of the pioneers at this period coming from North Carolina and Virginia, and consisting of Friends who were fleeing from slavery and its baneful influences. Another settlement of Friends, which soon had an "indulged" meeting of its own, sprang

[1] W. Williams's *Journal*, p. 24.

[2] One hundred and seventy of the original members of the Monthly Meeting were received by certificates from Miami and West Branch Meetings. They came to Ohio from Piney Grove, Bush River, and Cane Creek, South Carolina; from Contentnea, Symons's Creek, Spring, Cane Creek, Springfield and Back Creek, North Carolina; Lost Creek, Tennessee and from Mount Pleasant, Virginia. The complete list is given in Eli Jay's article printed in the *Centennial of White Water Meeting*, pp. 34-36.

up in 1809 along Silver Creek, seventeen miles south of White Water. A request for a Quarterly Meeting, "this side the Miami," was made as early as 1810, though it was not granted at once. The desired Quarterly Meeting named West Branch was first opened the 13th of June 1812, and was held alternately at West Branch and White Water.

Our old Friend, William Williams, returned to visit White Water in 1810 and he found himself called to "speak closely to the professors of truth, and to warn them against settling down in formality without the life."[1] This ministering Friend moved to Indiana in 1814 and settled with his family, "in quietude and satisfaction," on the Elkhorn fork of the White Water, about four miles from the original settlement. He was the foremost preacher among the early pioneers and he endeavoured to leave behind "the shells of religion" and to talk about the kernel. He reports one occasion on which, after a long silence, he stepped upon a bench, so that the people could see him, and "spoke to them for the space of three hours"! He adds: "Then I was drawn in supplication, the life continuing in all, so that the meeting held more than four hours! Much might be said of this blessed meeting, for indeed it was a watering time." He gives one more interesting glimpse of the character of the White Water meetings of this period:

> The 26th was our Monthly Meeting at White-water, which was a refreshing time; and the First-day meeting at the same place was large, many coming in not of our society; and I had large service on the subject of war, in which I found peace. The people were still and attentive, and many were much affected and tendered into tears by the power of the truth, which accompanied the word spoken, for which I did rejoice in God, from whom cometh all good.[2]

Joseph Cloud, who lived in Miami Meeting, frequently visited White Water Meeting and powerfully ministered not only to the Friends but to the other settlers as well,

[1] *Journal*, p. 76. [2] *Ibid.* p. 123.

collecting them in the woods and revealing to them the joys and comforts of religion. John Simpson from Pennsylvania, who had visited Indiana in 1806, migrated to West Branch, Ohio, and he also came at various times to bring religious messages to the Indiana settlers.

In 1810 Jesse Bond was recorded a Minister by White Water Meeting, and not long after that John Morrow's "gift was recognized." Already in the few months intervening between the establishment of the Monthly Meeting and the recording of the first Minister, one hundred and thirty-seven new members had been received by certificate. In 1811, two hundred and fifty-five more came and nearly as many the year following.

In 1811 White Water Monthly Meeting "liberated" two of its own members to go out on a religious visit to new settlements of Friends in the southern part of Indiana Territory—"to encourage them, as truth may open the way, to be faithfully obedient to the manifestation of the divine witness in their own hearts."

Among the Friends of this early period, John Townsend, who came from South Carolina, Thomas Roberts, also from South Carolina, and Samuel Charles, from North Carolina, were weighty and influential Elders. They exercised a very important formative influence over the moral and spiritual life of the White Water group. Another early influence was the visitation of the annual Epistle from London Yearly Meeting, which was generally a constructive document with an illuminating spiritual message.

These early Indiana settlers had serious military problems to face during the "war of 1812." Even before the war began, in 1810, Friends of White Water Monthly Meeting had addressed a Memorial to William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Territory, and they had sent two of their members to lay it before the legislative assembly at Vincennes. They set forth "the conscientious scruples of Friends against bearing arms, or acting in any manner as military men," and they asked for such "an alteration in the military laws as may appear to the

Legislature reasonable, equitable and humane." At first relief was granted to Friends and much clemency was shown them, but as the stress and urgency increased with the sternness of the war, Friends were called upon to suffer for their convictions, though the sufferings do not appear to have been very excessive.[1]

Still westward the current of Quaker migration flowed. Lick Creek, White Lick, Blue River, Middle Fork and West Grove were some of the interesting new settlements being builded out of Friends from the south and east. Lick Creek Monthly Meeting was established in 1812, and from that time on new Monthly Meetings were organized in rapid succession. After 1813 all these meetings in Indiana belonged to Ohio Yearly Meeting and a large number of Friends rode across to attend the great gathering, until they had in 1821 a Yearly Meeting of their own, in a spacious new meeting-house by the White Water. Two more or less independent chains of meetings formed northward, respectively from White Water in the east and from White Lick in the west, the two chains finally joining in an apex at New London.

Charles F. Coffin, whose father, Elijah Coffin, was one of the pioneer Friends and for many years clerk of Indiana Yearly Meeting, wrote in 1858 a very interesting account of this first Yearly Meeting, from which I give a short extract:

All the members of the new Yearly Meeting were but recent settlers in a wilderness country, and most of them in limited circumstances; and their time having been fully occupied in clearing away the forests and procuring the necessaries of life, they had but few of its comforts about them. There were not, probably, more than twenty carriages of any description at the first Yearly Meeting; nearly all the members, both men and women, who came from a distance, travelled on horseback. The roads were but little improved, and in many places were almost impassable. The Friends in the vicinity mostly lived in cabins or other small houses, but their hospitality was unbounded, and such as they had was freely shared with their brethren from other

[1] I have throughout this section been under obligation to Charles F. Coffin's four articles in vol. xi. of *Friends' Review* (Phila., 1858).

places, and the number which some of them entertained would seem almost incredible at the present day; notwithstanding many were obliged to lodge in barns, and others to go several miles off to the surrounding settlements. No hotels of sufficient size to accommodate many persons were found in the vicinity, and no compensation was expected or received by Friends and others in the neighbourhood, who entertained Friends from other parts of the Yearly Meeting.[1]

William Forster, from England, arrived in Indiana the year the Yearly Meeting was opened, but just too late to attend it. He has, however, given us in his Diary a few very interesting glimpses of the conditions of life at this time. The first passage is an account of a visit in a new settlement at Spring Creek on the Wabash, the second describes a settlement, also on the Wabash, near Turman's Creek and the third is a brief account of the settlement at White Water, which had now begun to be called Richmond. The passages from this rare spirit are as follows:

We were guests to our Friend Benjamin Bailey, and his worthy wife, who had not been previously visited by Friends. I think they did their best to keep us warm; but, the cabin being without a window, we were obliged to have the door open for light, and the logs not being well plastered, it required some little watchfulness to suppress the rising of a murmur. We had a meeting with a few friends in the neighbourhood in the evening, which, though not without some unpleasant interruption, was attended with sufficient feeling to satisfy us that we were pursuing the path of duty; and as there is a prospect of more Friends settling in the neighbourhood, I trust it will not be long before they are encouraged to hold a meeting among themselves. . . .

About noon, we got to our Friend, Joshua Dick's, on Turman's Creek, and in the evening had a meeting, about one mile distant, at Abner Hunt's, where we lodged. It is quite a new settlement of Friends, from the upper part of North Carolina; perhaps there may be fifty individuals, and it is but lately they have begun to hold a meeting. I was given up to labour in word and doctrine, as the way might be opened for me; and I trust that to some it was an opportunity of instruction, and the renewing of strength; the day closed in peace. We had now visited Friends very

[1] *Friends' Review*, vol. xi. p. 486.

generally on the Wabash; their number is not large, and certainly, as to that which constitutes the life and power of religion, the Society must be considered to be in a low state. There is no Friend acknowledged as a Minister among them; and I had to fear that the discipline is far from being supported in the authority of Truth, and that the attendance of meetings for worship was regarded by many Friends with great indifference. . . .

We went that evening to the house of Jesse Williams; they were kind Friends, and having some understanding of the comforts and refinement of civilized life, though for the present inhabiting but a poor cabin, we found it a place of true rest. The meeting at Chester was large; and, being in good measure enabled to cast off the burthen that I believed to have been brought upon me, I felt more relieved than at many other times.

We returned with our Friends to their quiet habitation, and went with them to their meeting at White Water, near Richmond, on First-day morning. This is one of the largest meetings in the state, containing, I suppose, not less than 120 or 130 families, forty of whom live in Richmond, which is a thriving village, finely situated on a high bank above the Whitewater river.[1]

Stephen Grellet, the great evangelical Quaker, now thoroughly convinced of the prevalence of anti-christian views throughout the Society in America, attended Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1824 and has left a very brief but important passage about it. It is as follows:

I proceeded to Richmond, Indiana, taking meetings on the way. That Yearly Meeting was very large; the immigration from slave states to these parts is great; it renders them however a very mixed company, and it will require time before they can rightly understand one another, and get over their various early prejudices. Their business was conducted harmoniously. There are some here also who have made strong efforts to sow the seed of infidelity, and have succeeded in many cases.[2]

In 1816 there were according to the records one hundred and sixty-five families in White Water Monthly meeting. Timothy Nicholson, who left North Carolina in 1855 and settled in Richmond, Indiana, where he is still living (in 1920), estimates that twelve hundred Friends migrated from the southern States, the large

[1] *Memoirs of W. Forster*, vol. i. pp. 341, 342, 350.
[2] *Memoirs of Stephen Grellet*, vol. ii. pp. 165, 166.

proportion being from North and South Carolina, to the White Water region during the ten years between 1809 and 1819. He thinks, furthermore, that not less than six thousand Friends migrated from the southern States in the slavery period, from 1800 to 1860.[1] They were, of course, not all high-minded patriots, seeking freedom and going out, like Abraham, in lofty faith that God would lead them into a better, that is a freer country than the one they were leaving. Some of them were adventurers, with a slender amount of idealism. But the great body of this migration was composed of men and women who were determined to live in a land where men worked with their own hands and gained their bread with the sweat of their own brows, and where no persons of any colour were held in bondage. The toil of that first generation of settlers was severe and almost continuous. We, in these easy settled times, can hardly conceive what it would mean to make farms out of thick forests, or what it would be like to live in log cabins in the woods and rear families under those hard pioneer conditions. These settlers at first lived largely on the wild meat which their guns secured—bear, deer, squirrel, turkey meat. Until they could get a patch of corn they used various substitutes for bread, such as cakes made of roasted acorns pounded fine, and flour made of various wild grains. Professor Harlow Lindley has given a good description of their rough, home-made implements of labour. He says :

They made a very serviceable plow with a wooden mouldboard, which was made of the best hard wood obtainable. They made a very serviceable harrow entirely of wood. The horse collars were made mostly of corn shucks plaited in large rope-like sections, and sewed together hard and fast with leather thongs. They also made collars of raw hide, cutting it in the proper shape, and sewing the edges together, stuffing it on the inside to make it hold its shape. The bridle was made of raw hide. Hames were made from the lower part of the tree, including a part of the root for the proper crook. A wagon that was termed a truck was made from cutting four large wheels from a large tree, usually

[1] See Weeks' *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, p. 271.

a black gum. Oxen were the usual teams that were hitched to these crude but serviceable wagons. A heavy wooden yoke went on the oxen's necks. The pitch forks for all purposes on the farm were made of wood and wooden rakes were made of strong, seasoned wood. A good spade was made of seasoned hickory.[1]

We find repeated in the Indiana Monthly Meetings the social and moral situations which we have found prevailing in the Ohio and Monongahela meetings. Great stress was laid upon "plainness" of dress and speech. A very large number of Friends in White Water Monthly Meeting—and the same thing applies to all other Monthly Meetings in Indiana—were disowned "for deviating from plainness of dress and address." This course of procedure went on with little abatement for fifty years, and some of the finest persons among the immigrant settlers and their children were expelled from membership because they would not conform to this stern rule of the "peculiar people." In 1822, a committee of White Water Monthly Meeting, appointed to assist the Overseers in removing deficiencies in the matter of this testimony of plainness, refused to continue in the service. They insist that their hands have been weakened and their efforts defeated, because, as they complain, "while we the committee have laboured to bring about the *simplicity* so much desired and so consistent with our principles, we have been discouraged from further labour therein *by the appointment of those who are not good examples of plainness and temperance to important services in the Society*"! But in spite of this tendency to promote some who were not "plain" enough, the warfare against "deviation from the principles of Truth" went on unabated, and in 1828 a new committee was appointed "to visit families and individuals for their help and encouragement in the support of our several Christian testimonies, particularly on plainness in dress and address."

Another great perennial struggle was that to "maintain love and unity" among the members. They were individualistic, impulsive and somewhat infallible in their

[1] *White Water Centennial*, p. 49.

opinions, and they did not always harmonize readily. We find frequent mention in the minutes of White Water Meeting of the appointment of a committee to join with women Friends "on account of deficiencies existing amongst us in regard to love and unity," and the committee is very apt to report:

> We have attended to our appointment and laboured therein agreeably to the ability afforded us, to some satisfaction, *but not so much so as is desired*; yet we entertain a hope that our labours have not been lost!

No members were allowed to engage in any lawsuit without permission of the meeting to which they belonged. This curious minute appears on the records of White Water Monthly Meeting under date of 29th of 12th month, 1821:

> Robert Hill requests the privilege of suing at law. Committee of 6 men are appointed to inspect into the circumstances and if they think proper grant him that privilege as it appears to him a case of emergency and report to next meeting.

26th of 1st month, 1822:

> Friends appointed on the request of Robert Hill report that they think he ought to have the privilege requested in one case only with which the meeting unites.

When the question arose regarding the privilege of dissolving a marriage contract, the answer was plain and flat that no such course could be allowed. Here is a typical minute of White Water Monthly Meeting of 20th of 12th month, 1825:

> None of our members are allowed to avail themselves of a legal privilege in dissolving the marriage contract and none in membership can retain their right of membership nor any be received whilst remaining in that state.

There was always a short shrift for fiddlers. No kinds of music were approved by Friends, but "fiddling" was at the very bottom round of this bad business, presumably because where there was fiddling there was usually dancing. The meeting complains of a member "for

buying, keeping and playing a fiddle," and a little later the records inform us that he was disowned "for playing a fiddle for people to dance with." That is the regular order of procedure with those who "buy and keep" fiddles! "Drinking spirituous liquors to excess" is another frequent ground for disownment. Fighting, "deviating from the Truth," attending a shooting match and betting, administering oaths, using bad language, attending meetings of a hireling ministry, attending a Free Mason Lodge and dressing in their uniform, are some of the occasions on which the extreme course of the Discipline is followed. One of the most remarkable cases of disownment was that of a man, who during the border troubles, in the period of the "war of 1812," *went into a fort for protection and refused to condemn his conduct.* White Water Monthly Meeting disowned him, 26th June 1813.

The more serious moral offences which have appeared in such distressing frequency in the earlier meetings farther east are still in evidence in the early meetings of Indiana. Whether the locality were the Monocacy River, the Monongahela, the Miami, the White Water or the White Lick, human frailty remained the same and temptation led to sin where men and women failed to rely on divine grace. The process of cutting off those who "married out," or who made use of "hireling teachers" to officiate on marriage occasions, continued as of old, though the proportion of those who apologized, or "gave satisfaction," and so were forgiven and reinstated, is much larger than in the meetings farther east.[1] Every early Monthly Meeting in Indiana has a pitiable list of disownments of persons who chose wife or husband outside the fold and who were thus turned adrift without a Church home at exactly the moment when they most needed the fostering care of the Church. There were many thousands of cases of disownment for this cause in the whole Society

[1] Of forty-nine cases in White Lick Monthly Meeting of Friends who "married out," only twelve were disowned, the others being retained because they made satisfactory "offering of condemnation."

of Friends during the period when the ideals of "the peculiar people" prevailed.

The stream of migration continued until the opening of the Civil War, and by it the meetings of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia and many sections of North Carolina were depleted and, in many cases, wiped out of existence. The same Quaker names and, in many instances, the same names of meetings reappear in Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana and farther west. Like the ancient lost Arethusa, the stream from the south burst forth again, the same and yet not the same.

It would be a serious historical mistake to point out the existing defects and derelictions, which probably prevailed at this period to about the same extent in the other sections of the Society, without at the same time emphasizing the qualities of strength and beauty that were exhibited in the best Quaker lives in the settlements west of the Ohio River. Most of the Friends who left their old homes to create new ones in the free North-west Territory had gone forth, in high faith and in obedience to what they believed was divine light, to escape the environment of slavery and to help make a great area for freedom in the uncontaminated West. They loved truth, they hated unrighteousness and they had a clear leading and a real vision of a better social order which could be constructed in a region where ancient habits and customs were lacking. Most of these Friends lived what they professed. They were sensitive in their consciences and tender in their spirits. They aimed to follow their best light and to be true to the highest that they knew. They were good material for the formative soil of a new community, and they did their part to make that growing community a spiritual one. Their venture, as they rode out from their old homes in their wagons and ox-carts, was a brave one, and they did yeoman service in the early work of building the new civilization beyond the Alleghanies.

While the migration from the slave States was setting westward a smaller migration of Friends was taking place

in the same direction in the State of New York, forming a new frontier for the Society out beyond the Hudson River. Cornwall Monthly Meeting, established in 1788, was the first meeting formed west of the Hudson. Saratoga Monthly Meeting, far to the north, formed a new outpost in 1793. In 1799 Philadelphia Friends, through a committee appointed for the purpose, established a Preparative and Monthly Meeting in Canada called Pelham Preparative and Monthly Meeting, the Friends of which were transferred to New York Yearly Meeting in 1810 by mutual agreement.[1] The pioneer movement in western New York came originally from East Hoosac Monthly Meeting, which was located at Adams, Massachusetts, and which belonged to New York Yearly Meeting. Its members began to move westward before the close of the eighteenth century and formed the nucleus of many new settlements. Abraham Lapham, one of the early pioneers, removed with his family from East Hoosac in 1792 against the advice of his meeting and settled in the Genesee Tract in western New York, a tract opened for settlement west of Seneca Lake, about eighty miles long and forty-two miles wide. "Much labour was bestowed" upon him to prevent his removal and, after he went, he was "under dealings" for four years. In 1796 he made the following acknowledgment to his meeting and was restored to "good standing":

DEAR FRIENDS,—Whereas I removed with my family to the Genesee without having Friends' advice and council therein as a meeting, although I saw no other way but to remove as I did and I have not as yet seen but that my being there with my family may be right and wherein moveing I have transgressed the good order established by Friends I am sorry for it and do condone the same as I think I do clearly see that all such removals ought to be in the full unity of our brethren and I desire Friends to pass by my offences and receive me into membership again. These from your well-wishing friend, ABRAHAM LAPHAM.[2]

[1] New York and Philadelphia Y.M.'s united in establishing a Half-Year's Meeting in Canada in 1809, which held its first session in January 1810. Canada Y.M. (Orthodox) was established by New York Y.M. in 1867.

[2] Minutes of East Hoosac M.M. for Eleventh Month, 1796.

Caleb Mackumber (Macomber) of the same meeting felt a "concern" in 1797 to remove to "the Genesee country" and he requested the advice of his meeting. The committee to which this problem was referred reported a month later that his request "appeared in some degree reasonable," and he was left at liberty to migrate. Others from the same meeting soon joined the Genesee group, some with the approval of the meeting and some contrary to its advice. At first these Friends were linked up with Saratoga Monthly Meeting, but in 1803 Farmington Monthly Meeting was established for Friends in western New York, the Preparative Meeting having been already established in 1800. Other meetings were established in rapid succession, as the Friends were moving west in large numbers. Scipio Monthly Meeting dates from 1808, De Ruyter from 1809, Hamburg from 1814, Junius from 1815, Collins from 1820, Hector from 1821, Rochester from 1825, and Elba from 1837. There were about forty Preparative Meetings composing these western Monthly Meetings.

As early as 1798 Quaker settlements were formed across the northern border, Adolphus Preparative Meeting being set up in "Upper" Canada that year. The Quaker movement thus begun spread rapidly in the Canadian towns along the frontier line and considerable difficulty of intercourse between the Canadian and the New York Friends was experienced during the war of 1812. In fact, Hamburg Monthly Meeting on the New York side was established because the Friends belonging to the towns of Hamburg and Eden and Concord in Niagara County, formerly belonging to Pelham, in Canada, had their communications with their Monthly Meeting across the border interrupted by the exigencies of the war. The outposts of the Society kept continually moving both northward and westward, so that a considerable fringe of meetings was formed on the Canadian side and another group of meetings was formed farther west in Michigan, especially in the beautiful Raisin Valley. By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century there was a very large and flourishing group of meetings in the western

counties of New York State, especially in Ontario, Genesee, and Cayuga Counties. So abundant were the Friends in the western and northern section that the three Quarterly Meetings—Farmington, established in 1810, Scipio, established in 1825, and Canada (Yonge Street), in 1810—united in asking in 1827 for the establishment of a new Yearly Meeting to be called "Ontario Yearly Meeting," but the great separation of 1827–1828 ended that hope.[1] At the time of the separation there were no less than forty-three hundred Friends in the two western Quarterly Meetings of New York State alone.[2] The families who composed the migration to western New York were vigorous, venturous and forward-looking. Many of them came originally from the New England meetings, for East Hoosac meeting was made up largely of families who had moved there from the east. We meet in the western groups many well-known and famous New England names — Howland, Shore, Hoxie, Hathaway, Chase, Atwater, Hoag, Comstock, Baker, Lapham. They had the pioneer spirit, and with it deep religious conviction and devotion to their Society. They faced the difficulties of migration, the conquest of the unconquered forests, the creation of farms where there were none, the dangers and trials of frontier life, the task of rearing new homes and a new civilization, and wherever they went they first of all formed their meeting for worship and their religious organization. In many localities, as they pushed west, they built the first house for worship in the community and offered the first opportunity for religious fellowship.

As a result of all the migrations and of the later growth and expansion of membership, the following Yearly Meetings in the course of time have come into existence: Ohio in 1813, Indiana in 1821, Western (in Western Indiana)

[1] After the separation a new Yearly Meeting of Hicksite Friends, called Genesee Y.M., was established in 1834 for the Friends of this branch in western New York and Canada. In 1828 Canada Half-Year's Meeting was composed of five Monthly Meetings, with a membership of 1321 (Orthodox) and 763 (Hicksite).

[2] The membership of the two Q.M.'s was divided as follows at the time of the separation: total for Farmington Q.M., 3073; total for Scipio Q.M., 1232.

in 1858, Iowa in 1863, Canada in 1867, Kansas in 1872, Wilmington (in Western Ohio) in 1892, Oregon in 1893, California in 1895 and Nebraska in 1908.

The membership of the Orthodox American Yearly Meetings was estimated in 1843 on a basis of educational statistics to be as follows: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 8686, New York 11,000, New England 10,000, Baltimore 800, Virginia 500, North Carolina 4500, Ohio 18,000, and Indiana 30,000—a total of 83,486.[1]

We must turn now to follow, not the story of pilgrims fleeing from the environment of slavery to a land of freedom and hope, but the tragic story of theologica battles and pitiful divisions.

[1] See *British Friend* for 1843, p. 117. No figures are given for the Hicksite Y.M.'s, which are referred to elsewhere.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE GREAT SEPARATION

THE greatest tragedy of Quaker history was the separation of the Society in America, in 1827–1828, into two branches. It was a tragedy in the old Greek sense of the word—an inevitable collision, due not to the perversity of this person or that, to an accidental blunder here or there, but to the irresistible maturing of tendencies of thought which at that period were irreconcilable, and could end only by breaking the once united and harmonious body of Friends into two unsympathetic and misunderstanding branches, both shorn of power. We saw in a previous chapter how the lines of thought diverged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Steadily more and more with the progress of time the chasm widened. The influence of the "world" beat in upon the youth of the Society. Many of them became entangled in the rationalistic inquiries of the time, many were unresponsive to the ministry which they heard and untouched by the kind of spiritual nurture offered to them. The visiting Ministers of the period frequently, almost monotonously, report that they found the youths "raw" and the meetings "dull and unspiritual." There was a sad amount of looseness and immorality, especially in rural neighbourhoods, and the Overseers seemed powerless to check the serious drift of the time.

Some under these circumstances inclined sternly to more rigid puritanic measures and to an increasingly evangelical type of religion. They were for winnowing the Society clean of all who failed to conform to the require-

ments of Discipline, and they were ready to prune away all branches of the vine that seemed dry and fruitless. In many sections the application of rules as a method of purification was excessive, and the Elders, in their zeal for what seemed to them spiritual ideals, were overstern, not in sympathy with the spirit of youth and determined to preserve "the peculiar heritage" by methods which they insisted worked well in the days of their own youth. They were, however, not wide awake to the new needs of the new time. The current of thought had changed. New ideas were in the air. New questions were being asked, new interests were stirring. The old swaddling-clothes were too tight for the growing body, but the foster-guardians did not understand the signs of their time, were ignorant of the laws of growing minds and hoped fondly that Discipline, which had always worked like magic, would continue to work.

The most serious lack for dealing adequately with the situation was the lack of historical insight. Neither party was possessed of the historical spirit or equipped with any clear knowledge of historical development. Each group, as the issue grew intense, stoutly contended that it represented primitive Quakerism, each quoted the Quaker "fathers" *ad nauseam* and each honestly believed that its ideas were the ideas which had come as an inspiration to the builders of the Society in the seventeenth century. Neither group showed, however, any real historical grasp of early Quakerism, and still less any comprehension of the transformations which the years between had wrought. Still feebler was the apprehension of primitive Christianity. Each party claimed to be presenting real, genuine, unalloyed Christianity, but neither one knew how to go back without prejudices and without a stock of inheritances and preconceptions to *feel* the creative significance of the gospel message as it was. Both parties had the air of infallibility and both were entrenched in their absolute certainty of truth, but neither possessed any authoritative way of verifying and testing its truth, except "the good old way" of tradition and positive assertion.

For a quarter of a century and more the evangelical conception had been gaining in intensity in one section of the Society, and the message of the great revivalists had slowly percolated in from the great world and made a profound impression on many minds. But the attempt to graft the evangelical system on to the Quaker interpretation of Christianity as the remedy for lethargy and doubt was not an easy thing to do. The Quaker movement had been born as a mighty protest of soul against the habit of turning religion into the adoption of theological doctrines. The Friends were, in the period of their origin, as much opposed to doctrine as they were to priests and sacraments. It was precisely in these particulars that they proposed to reform the Reformation. Over against the vast system of doctrine, which was pronounced essential for salvation, the Quaker had found a new and living way —the inner way of direct relation of the soul with a present living Christ.

A return now to doctrine and to theological "notions" could not satisfy those Friends who knew the vital significance of the inner principle of Quakerism. They saw clearly that the two things, incompatible in themselves, could not be grafted together. The Quaker movement, to live and survive as a distinctive interpretation of Apostolic Christianity, must remain true and loyal to its central idea, which was the continuous vital and authoritative work of Christ in the human soul. To graft on to this the external plan of salvation as it was expounded by the revivalists of the eighteenth century was really to surrender the priceless jewel which the early Friends had bought at such a price of suffering and death. On the other hand, the Quaker "movement" had become arrested and static. It had grown sterile. Under the influence of Quietism it had become dry and unnatural. As a set of stereotyped phrases its truth no longer had the marching power of the mighty experience of other days. The type of ministry in a religious body is always a sure barometer of its spiritual life and power. By this test the Quaker meeting of the period was found

wanting. There were occasional itinerant Ministers who reached the life and awakened the vision, but much of the speaking was dull and uninspired. Logical of course it was not, but what really mattered was that it was not psychological. It did not fit the human need of the time. It did not speak to the condition of the soul. It seemed out of tune with the great saving message which was really needed to wake the world, grown callous with habit and sunk in sin.

The only hope of solution lay in the appearance of a prophet who could sound once more the deeps of the soul and at the same time sound the deeps of the Gospel, and bring forth a message which would bind both the inner reality and the outer truth into one harmonious and consistent whole. If a person could have been raised up then to interpret Scripture as we now grasp it in the light of historical study, and if he could have joined with that insight the convincing testimony of first-hand experience of direct relation with a present inward-revealing God, truly Immanuel now as in Palestine, he might have piloted the ship through the rocks and through that bitter storm of a century ago. Already in the literary world the signs of dawn were appearing. Wordsworth and Coleridge were interpreting the spiritual life of man in fresh and transforming ways. They had discovered that man is essentially a spiritual being—there is "more in him than can be referred to the life of nature and the mechanism of organization." But their great message had as yet hardly touched the inner life of the Society of Friends, while Coleridge's epoch-making treatment of the Bible, in *The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, was not published until 1840—six years after his death. Within the Society of Friends, with its hedges and defences against the currents and forces of the world, a prophet of the type that was needed could hardly have come in the natural order of things. The time was not yet ripe for him. The necessary step of preparation had not been taken. Psychological insight was lacking. The inclusive spirit had not come. The infallible certainty of

one-sided half-truth held sway and would not yield. There lay the tragedy. Each side needed the other. Each half-truth was by itself a poor thin thing. Each "infallible" position was untenable alone. Both pointed to a higher uniting truth which would have supplemented the lack and failure of each—but nobody then could rise to the true height or discover the synthesis or bind the two "wings" together in one living body. We can perhaps now, on this better vantage ground, understand the tragedy and interpret it. We cannot undo the past—there is always an apocalyptic finality about the past—but we may be able to make the past throw a flood of constructive light upon the present and the future, and the study may reveal some healing lessons to us of the later time. It will seem to some perhaps a mistake to "rake up" the buried past again and to turn away from live issues of the present to dwell upon a struggle now as dead as the proverbial "door-nail." But in one sense the past is never dead. It keeps reviving and coming to life in the present. We always find our way forward by learning the significance of the way behind us. There is much that is dry and antiquated in this controversy, but there is also much that will wake to meaning as we gaze anew upon it.

Elias Hicks of Jericho, New York, was far and away the most striking personality of the historical drama. His name has become indissolubly attached to the separation, and one party to it has attributed to him the cause of the catastrophe and the blame for it. We shall find, as we study the events historically, that cause and blame cannot be fixed upon any one individual alone, but it remains true nevertheless that Elias Hicks was the dominant character in the struggle, and we cannot understand what happened without an intimate acquaintance with him and his body of ideas. He was born in Hempstead township, Long Island, New York, 19th March 1748. His parents had united with Friends a short time before the birth of Elias, and he at once found himself in an atmosphere of Quaker ideas, ideals and

aspirations. The boy had slender book education, but he possessed a natively keen, strong mind, and he early acquired the reading habit which steadily widened his horizon and gave him a larger world than that in which most Friends of the time lived. He showed, at a very early period, an unusual sensitiveness to the movings of conscience. In his tender years he "felt the operations of divine grace;" he lived in "the dread of the Lord," and, like John Woolman, he became strongly impressed that it was wrong wantonly to take the life of any animal.[1] He always remained sensitive to suffering. He revolted from any procedure which involved pain and suffering for man or animal. He had a tender spirit. He married Jemima Seaman in his twenty-third year, and went to live in the Seaman homestead at Jericho, Long Island, where eleven children were born to them, and where for fifty-eight years husband and wife lived together in love and beautiful fellowship, passing through many hard experiences of loss and trial together.

Elias went through the usual preparatory steps of experience for public ministry, all of them of course being steps of inward preparation—"operative influences of divine grace," "deep concerns of mind to avoid sins and vanities of the world," "close exercise and travail of spirit at the prospect of speaking," and finally "quiet resignation to the heavenly call." When in due time he yielded in "dread and fear" to the impression of duty, his soul experienced "joy and sweet consolation for the act of faithfulness," and, he adds, "as I continued persevering in duty and watchfulness, I witnessed an increase in divine knowledge and an enlargement in my gift."[2] At every point of his unfolding he reveals the influence of Quaker Journals and the still more powerful contagion of the social group in which he lived.

He became eloquent as a speaker, unusually virile and robust. Walt Whitman has described from memory his impression of Hicks as follows:

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[1] *Journal of Elias Hicks* (1832), pp. 8-13.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 16.

A pleading, tender, nearly agonizing conviction, and magnetic stream of natural eloquence, before which all minds and natures, all emotions, high or low, gentle or simple, yielded entirely, without exception—not argumentative or intellectual, but so penetrating—so different from anything in books. While he goes on he falls into the nasality and sing-song tone, sometimes heard in [Friends] meetings; but in a moment or two more, as if recollecting himself, he breaks off, stops and resumes in a natural tone.[1]

Whitman describes the man himself as a "tall, straight figure, neither stout nor very thin, dressed in drab cloth, clean-shaven face, forehead of great expanse, large clear black eyes, long or middling long white hair." Anna Braithwaite gives a similar account of his personal appearance—"very striking, a tall thin person, with prominent eyebrows, his hair combed back in the way Joseph Gurney Bevan's used to be: his dress like the pictures of Friends 100 years ago."[2]

For fifty years Elias Hicks preached in the Long Island meetings, travelled extensively throughout the groups of Friends on the American continent and grew to be an old man before any disturbance was raised about his variations in doctrinal teaching.[3] He was one of the

[1] Walt Whitman's *Prose Works*, p. 464.

[2] *Memoirs of Anna Braithwaite* (London, 1905), p. 139. Anna (Lloyd) Braithwaite (1788–1859) was the wife of Isaac Braithwaite of Kendal and mother of Joseph Bevan Braithwaite.

[3] Stephen Grellet, as early as 1808, had become disturbed over certain positions held by Elias Hicks and he "fervently and earnestly laboured" with the latter, but there was little sign of any widespread concern until much later. See *Memoirs of Stephen Grellet*, vol. i. pp. 142, 143.

According to a striking passage in Thomas Shillitoe's *Journal* two English Friends, believed to be Mary Ridgway and Jane Watson, had "prophesied" in 1793 that Elias Hicks would some day "trouble Israel." The passage occurs in a personal description of the "separation" in New York Yearly Meeting. After the "orthodox" Friends had withdrawn from the meeting-house to the medical college in Duane St., where they reorganized, the following incident occurred. "Daniel Haviland, a very aged blind Friend, broke forth in a melodious manner, and alleged his spirit was now set at liberty, and his lips unsealed to speak of things he had seen for nearly forty years, and who it should be that would introduce such disorder and confusion in the Society; adding, thirty-five years ago, when the Yearly Meeting was held at Westbury, on Long Island, two women Friends from across the great water, sitting in a room by themselves in the Friends' house where he lodged, seeing him pass the room door, called him in, and pointing to E. Hicks who was in another room, said, 'That man will, some day or other, be a troubler in Israel.' He said that the scene we had passed through in this Yearly Meeting was clearly unfolded to his view before he came to the city, and he expressed his thankfulness to his heavenly Father for this great deliverance." (Shillitoe's *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 313.)

most extensive travellers and one of the most powerful of all the itinerant Ministers of the time. He was a profoundly mystical type of person, able to sit for long periods in "a perfect, sweet calm," wherein his whole being was "swallowed up in divine seraphic enjoyment."[1] He was extremely sensitive, almost as much so as Thomas Shillitoe, to inner guidance of the Spirit, to convictions of duty, and to obedience to the Light within. He leaned strongly —no Friend of his time more strongly—in the direction of Quietism. He declares again and again that it will not do to have any confidence in the "creature," or in "reasoning" as it operates in man's "fallen nature." He builds no hopes at all on man in his "natural" condition. He shows himself in this particular a product of the past rather than a prophet of the future. There must be, he continually insists, a withdrawal from the "world," a relaxing of all dependence on outward props and helps of every sort, "a sequestration from everything of an outward or external nature," a return into the holy place within, a patient travail of soul, through inward poverty and death to "own-will," until the soul finds itself merged in union of will with the will of the Highest.[2] With this prevailing, fundamental attitude was joined quite naturally a strong tendency to insist, as Job Scott had done, upon a type of religion which began and ended in inward processes rather than upon the adoption of notions and doctrines. He was as much opposed as any Friends of his time to the deistical questionings of the age and he often preached and wrote against these views. A good illustration of his attitude is found in his account of his feelings while travelling in Virginia. He says:

Whilst in this neighbourhood, my mind was brought into a state of deep exercise and travail, from a sense of the great turning away of many among us, from the law and the testimony, and the prevailing of a spirit of great infidelity and deism among the

[1] *Journal of Elias Hicks*, p. 105.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 131, 165, 175, 180, 383 and *passim*. In fact it was his excessive opposition to everything external and "creaturely" that led him to undervalue those aspects of historical Christianity which the orthodox party insisted upon.

people, and darkness spreading over the minds of many as a thick veil. It was a time in which Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* (falsely so called) was much attended to in those parts; and some, who were members of our Society, as I was informed, were captivated by his dark insinuating address, and were ready almost to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.[1]

References to deism and infidelity occur throughout the *Journal*, and he is always opposed to the spirit and effects of these tendencies, but he thought that deism and infidelity fed and flourished upon doctrinal disputes and that the way to combat this enemy of the faith was to make religion an inward affair and to turn from outward phrases to the Christ who lives and works in the soul.

The main difficulty, however, was that, without quite knowing it, Elias Hicks himself built up a very elaborate, complex and intricate body of counter-doctrines. He meant no doubt to turn people from speculation and notions to *experience* as the great remedy. But the student of his writings cannot miss the fact that through the long years of his ministry and leadership he was slowly developing a formulated system which turns out to be as foreign to first-hand experience, as much a construction of logical reason, as unverifiable in fact, and as likely to collapse with the progress of thought, as were the notions and doctrines against which he was a determined opponent. This account of Elias Hicks' body of thought will necessarily be dry and skeletal. Those who desire only the dramatic features will no doubt skip this section, but these views formed a large part of the material in Elias Hicks' sermons and they constitute an essential element for a comprehension of the controversy which raged around him. He is often thought of as a leader of "Unitarianism," and it is frequently assumed uncritically that he held "modern" views about Christ and Scripture and man. That judgment is not warranted by the facts. It is possible, no doubt, to think of his position as pointing toward Unitarianism and as a midway stage toward modern thought, but he is distinctly not

[1] *Journal*, p. 70.

"modern." He is all the time hampered and bound by the inadequate conceptions and the religious phraseology of the deistic controversy. He is an honest soul and a good fighter, but he is always compelled to use poor weapons. Let one turn for instance to Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, or to his *Confessions* where the new spirit and the fresh outlook were rising on the age, and he finds himself in a new world with the jungle behind him. If he takes up Channing's Sermon preached in Baltimore in 1819, on the occasion of Jared Sparks' ordination, he will feel a vast difference between the outlook of the Quaker and of the Unitarian. We are dealing here in the case of Hicks with a man who has discovered late in life that something serious is the matter with Quakerism around him. The pious phrases which he continually hears are hollow to him. The theological terms that pass as current coin do not ring true to him. He cannot honestly *conform* to the religious ideas which the Elders of his day approve and want preached. But he was not equipped with the necessary prophetic vision or with the intellectual leadership to enable him to cut through the jungle and to bring the contracted Society out into its large place.

We must turn now to as sympathetic an examination as possible of his system of religious thought. The pillar and ground of his entire system was the Light within. At first his use of "Light" appears to be more or less a way of describing his own experience, and we have in his *Journal*, as in so many other Quaker Journals, the progressive record of what seemed to be "divine operations" wrought in his own nature, and he declares that it is his "mission" as a Minister to rally men to "this everlasting and unchangeable standard of Light and Life in the soul," for "no other Saviour but such an one who takes His residence in the very centre of the soul of man can possibly bring salvation to man."[1] But on the other hand his writings abound with statements that are hardly

[1] See for example *Journal*, pp. 193, 194, 304; *The Quaker*, vol. i. pp. 202 and 206.

more than assertions or inferences or theological conclusions. They rest as little on experience as do the doctrines of St. Augustine. His doctrine of "the Light within," as it stands expounded in his various writings, reported sermons, letters and testimony may be summarized as follows:[1] There is "a portion of God," "a portion of divine life," in the rational soul of every man, "an emanation of God," sometimes called "an inward God" and sometimes "the uncreated Word" and sometimes "Christ." It is sufficient for salvation, that is to say, salvation depends upon nothing outward (*J.* 122 and *passim*). "An unchangeable spirit of truth," or "grace of God," which "reproves for sin," furnishes the soul with "an inward divine law," "a true teacher of the things of God," "an unerring Guide," or "Voice" or "Pilot." Through this gift of God the soul acquires "spiritual eyes," "ears" and an internal "sense," so that man can know immediately and infallibly what God's will is (*J.* 102, 140, 150, 412. *Q.* i. 4, 38, 134, ii. 274). A very clear passage from his *Journal* gathers up a number of the many phases of his inner Light doctrine and gives a good specimen account of these reiterated ideas:

> My mind was much engaged to turn the attention of the people from man, and from all dependence on anything without them, to the inward principle of divine light and truth, the great gospel minister; which as it is heeded and obeyed, leadeth into all truth, and out of all error and without whose teaching, the true and saving knowledge of God and Christ, which only brings eternal life to the soul, can never be obtained, although we may be favoured to sit under the most powerful gospel ministry, through the instrumentality of man, however divinely qualified to that end, from youth to old age. For all that the best outward instrumental help, either from reading the Scriptures, or hearing the Gospel preached in the clear demonstration of the spirit, can do for any man, is only to point to, and lead the minds of the children of men home to this divine inward principle manifested in their own hearts and minds.[2] . . .

[1] Where I quote the *Journal* for authority in this summary I shall use the letter "J" followed by the number of the page. "Q" refers to collections of sermons in a series of four volumes, called *The Quaker*. The volume will be given in Roman and the page in Arabic numerals. Other references will be given in full.

[2] *Journal*, p. 315.

We soon discover that this "Light" or "emanation of God" in man is not an elemental possession of human nature, but that man is a being of double compartments. The Light is a "gift" superadded to mere man so that we still have here as in so many other theologies, a dualistic world. Reason is barren and sterile until it is assisted by the Light. "We must not plead and reason as finite creatures—we must be wholly passive to the divine Light" (*Q.* iii. 108, 148, 149). "Man never brought into the world any knowledge and he [as man] has no power to decide correctly. It is only through the efficiency of this divine Light and Life or Grace of God that he can decide" (*Q.* i. 67). The mind is one reality or entity and the Light is another.[1]

This dualistic view made Elias Hicks quite naturally set a very slight value on education or on any kind of human contrivances for the advancement of moral and spiritual causes. The following conclusions flow out legitimately from his fundamental idea: "When we attempt to do anything by the contrivance or agreement of man, we oppose God Almighty, and take his seat in the heart; and here it brings on darkness, death, confusion, and every evil work" (*Q.* i. 115). "A great deal of learning is rather a hindrance than a help" (*Q.* i. 226). "All these human sciences are mere nonsense. They have no part nor lot in finding out the will and mind of God, which we cannot know till we know him" (*Q.* i. 226). Waiting before God one will know all the wisdom of those "who have been instructed through the medium of human science" and see how foolish it is. "Now what vast toil and labour there is to give children human science, when the money thus expended might be better thrown into the sea!" (*Q.* i. 252). "Studied preaching" is no preaching at all. A hireling minister is the prodigal son; what he preaches is husks, the people who listen are the swine! (*Q.* i. 259). He vigorously

[1] This view is everywhere stated or implied. For examples, see *J.* 10; *J.* 19; *J.* 23; *J.* 28; *J.* 269; *J.* 295; *Q.* i. 178; *Q.* i. 248; *Q.* i. 256; *Q.* iv. 85; *Q.* iv. 158.

disapproved of Bible societies, even of agricultural societies, and in fact of any institutions that exist solely for the purpose of enlarging man's natural powers and skill in temporal matters (*J.* 383, *Q.* iv. 131). Even colleges and academies are a doubtful blessing since "they take away the mind from its right director" (*Q.* i. 230). We can learn more from this inward teaching than we can from "all the books and men on the face of the earth" (*J.* 238). The doctrine of the "Light" carried Elias Hicks unconsciously to the very verge of a doctrine of election. He tends to take the decisions of life away from the rational will and to centre them instead in this mysterious Principle so that even belief or faith, as St. Augustine would say, is not a thing to be settled by reason,—it comes, if it comes at all, as a gift of Grace. The one sphere of the will is to decide whether to accept or to reject the Light. Here is a passage that points strongly in that direction :

> When we come to this Principle, this gift of Grace, this Light, there is no necessity for us to be careful about what we will believe and what we won't believe ; because nothing can give us true belief but this Light. It will give every one of the children of men a belief sufficient to induce them to enter on the work of salvation aright. For as this is the medium, and the only one, by which God continues with his rational creatures, there is no other way by which he gives them an evidence of what is right and what is wrong. For he has set good and evil before us all ; and left us to choose. As you come to this [Light] you need not trouble yourselves to recommend to your friends what they must believe, that they must believe this or that—it is all nonsense ; because a man cannot believe just what he wants to believe—he cannot believe anything but what the divine Light gives him an evidence of, and this he must believe, and he cannot resist it. Here, then, we discover, that belief is no virtue, and unbelief no crime ; because, why ? it is an involuntary thing to man (*Q.* i. 146).
>
> One must believe the truth when it comes upon him (*Q.* i. 169).
>
> Belief is not a voluntary act of the mind, but it is derived from evidence which we cannot resist (*Q.* i. 186).

The Light acts best, as the quietists maintained, when the man himself is still and reason is quiescent.

We must present ourselves as creatures who have no right to act anyway, but to sit *as blanks* before God Almighty, with nothing included in our minds to hinder him from speaking (*Q.* ii. 252).

The most happy state that one can enjoy is a state without a desire or thought, for there we are the Lord's, we are in his hands (*Q.* i. 172).

I felt nothing when I came into this meeting, nor had I a desire after anything, but to center down into abasement and nothingness; and in this situation I remained for a while, till I found something was stirring and rising in my spirit (*Q.* i. 47).

Hence the necessity of waiting in the spirit of our minds, and of retiring inward; for it is by our becoming still from all cogitations and fluctuating imaginations of our minds, by having all stilled and brought into quietness before him, that we can come to know him as we ought: "Be still and know that I am God." It is then and only then when our minds are emptied and divested of all creaturely cogitations, and all creaturely activity—when we center down into a state of self-abasement and nothingness—when the tabernacle or temple of the heart is emptied of everything of self, that it can become a fit receptacle for the King of Glory to enter into and make himself known (*Q.* iv. 270, 271).

What I say is given to me while standing and I give it as the counsel of God through a poor instrument—and this is my whole design; this is my whole aim (*Q.* i. 298).

For Elias Hicks, then, the Light is the source of all revelation. It is a bit of divinity put within man to control and direct him. Man's part is to become more and more obedient to the inner directions. And this is not, properly speaking, growth, for it does not change man himself. Of course he becomes more God-like as he follows the Light but not inherently as man. He acts in the God-like way because he has made himself into a mere instrument through which God acts. Hicks' theory of the Light is an exact counterpart of the orthodox theory of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. He always insists that the Light is an unerring Guide, and he believes that in the most momentous, and even in the most trivial, matters we may know absolutely the will of God for that concrete situation: "The Almighty cannot stand by and see us reach erroneous conclusions" (*Q.* i. 294).

This central conception, which it seemed necessary to present in some fulness of detail, prepares the way for Elias Hicks' peculiar views on other points of Christian doctrine. Holding as he did this theory of the Light, the Bible quite naturally took for him a subordinate place. As every man has an infallible Light in his own bosom, a Light that gives self-evident truth, it seems to him unnecessary to go to a book, which at its best would be only a secondary help. He does not question the accuracy of the Bible. Its truths are revealed by "the revealing Spirit of God" (*Q.* iv. 274). Its message is "old, yet ever new" (*J.* 162). The Light in us bears witness that the Scripture teachings are true (*J.* 122). He asserts with vigour and apparent sincerity that he believes and does not undervalue the Scriptures (*Q.* i. 19). But he will not admit that the Bible is an authoritative rule of faith or practice. To turn it into a permanent "rule" for all ages is, he claims, to "impeach the divine character and charge the infinite Jehovah with partiality."[1] In his famous letter to Phebe Willis, written in 1820, he declared that from his youth up to old age he had held and taught that Christians had suffered grave hurt from their tendency in all periods to idolize the Scriptures and to treat them as the Israelites did the brazen serpent. "All that is good in me abominates such superstitious conduct." He goes so far in this letter as to admit that he sometimes wonders whether good would not result if the Scriptures were temporarily withdrawn from men and they were compelled to get on without them. Then God could easily "raise up and qualify some of His faithful servants to write Scriptures, if He should think best, as good and as competent for the generation in which they lived, and likely much better than those wrote so many years since" [!][2]

The real difficulty is that, with his dualistic theory of "reason" and "Light," Elias Hicks cannot discover any

[1] From the first Letter of E. H. to Phebe Willis, *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 417.

[2] Second Letter to Phebe Willis, *ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 419-421.

way to utilize external aids to the spiritual life. If there is a super-added, miraculous source of all truth in an inner compartment of the human soul, then what function can anything have that stands outside man? "God has given to every man and woman a complete and sufficient rule of faith and practice without the aid of books or men,"[1] therefore the Bible can at best only point the seeker to the source of truth already at hand within. Nothing, he holds, that comes from the outside can bind us; nothing that is external can possess authority; nothing that was reported or recorded in ancient time can settle spiritual issues now. What he misses, of course, is the fact that the Old and New Testaments are full of human experience and of man's relationship with God, and that these accounts are always fresh and capable of interpretation for every new age. Jesus refrained, he says, from writing anything, "because he saw how the people hurt themselves [*i.e.* through contention and through dependence on the external] by what is written" (*Q.* i. 207). How far he pushed this thoroughly unpsychological theory as to the value of external aids to spiritual progress, may be seen from an interesting passage in the *Journal*:

> I was led in my communication to-day, to show the unreasonableness of some people, in looking to, and depending on, being made Christians, by the ministrations of men, and information derived from books and writings; when, alas, the ministration of angels would be entirely insufficient for that purpose. The ministration of the *Son and sent of God*, even the *divine word* that was in the beginning with God, and was God, is only sufficient to effect that great and blessed end; and that, not by anything which he has *spoken*, *commanded*, or done without us, but by what he *speaks*, *commands*, and *does within us*.[2]

Jesus Christ, as a separate historical personality, is put by Elias Hicks in the subordinate list of outer helps. Being external to our own souls, He cannot be, Hicks thought, a direct source of revelation for us, nor can He be a primary authority in religious matters, for it was his

[1] First Letter to Phebe Willis, *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 417.
[2] *Journal*, p. 190. The italics are in the original.

fundamental view that all direct revelation and all primary authority must come from within. Everything else can have only a figurative value. He made a marked distinction between Jesus of Nazareth and Christ. Jesus for him was a model man who lived in Palestine at a definite date, and who did a definite historical work for His race. He was a Jew and He brought to a culmination the work of the prophets of Israel. He lived without sin, though He was tempted like other men. He saw how the Jewish nation might be brought to the fulfilment of its lofty destiny and He dedicated His life to the task of being the deliverer and saviour of Israel. His primary mission was to that nation. "He came to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and His outward life is valuable to us only as a striking figure or parable of inward human life.

There was of necessity limitation to His earthly experience and reality. He could not change the spirit of His own disciples while He was living the outward life in the flesh. He could only point people away to the real and everlasting source of life and power. This outward historical Jesus is not our Saviour. His material blood has no saving efficacy and His greatest follower was right when he resolved to leave behind the outward —"Christ after the flesh," *i.e.*, Jesus in His historical life —and turn to the real source of life and salvation, the eternal inward Christ (*Q.* i. 32 ; *Q.* i. 41 ; *Q.* i. 68 ; *Q.* i. 69 ; *Q.* iv. 275 ; *J.* 190 ; *J.* 304).

The signal, wonderful, miraculous, supernatural thing about Jesus was the measure of the Spirit that dwelt in Him and was revealed through Him. This inner Spirit that was in Jesus is the Christ, the eternal principle of Light and Life and Grace—the Word or Logos of God. Jesus was different from other men only in this point that the eternal Christ was in Him in greater degree than in any other person who has lived on earth. But the same Spirit, the same eternal Christ, is revealed in our souls, is trying to come to birth in us and to enable us to say, "I am a son of God," "I and my Father are one." He is

our greatest "example," "our forerunner," the "top-stone" of the edifice, the only man who has reached the full and perfect life, but we have "a portion" of the same divine Spirit that was in Him. His power to be a Saviour lay entirely in the Spirit and in the Light that were in Him. The foundation-rock of all religion is this Christ who still lives within the soul. There is no other spiritual teacher, helper, guide, reprover or redeemer than this Christ who was the power and life in Jesus, our pattern. "Who and What is Jesus Christ?" he asks. "It is an eternal principle in the soul, and nothing else can be Christ our Saviour"; "no other Saviour but such an one who takes his residence in the very centre of the soul of man can possibly produce salvation to man" (*Q.* i. 34; *Q.* i. 42; *Q.* i. 69; *Q.* i. 113; *Q.* iii. 104; *Q.* iv. 156; *J.* 141; *J.* 304). "To Christ as God in Spirit, but not to Christ as man," he wrote to Phebe Willis in 1820, "I ascribe all true divinity." "Divinity," he adds, "cannot be ascribed to any corporal matter [*i.e.* to any person in the flesh] only in similitude or shadow."[1]

The most radical of all the views which Elias Hicks set forth a hundred years ago were the views which he expressed regarding sin and salvation. He rejected outright the entire theory that the human race has been tainted or ruined by the inheritance of Adam's sin. He entertained no doubts as to the historicity of man's "fall." It consisted primarily, in Adam's case, in turning from the inward spiritual guide, in trusting the outward senses and animal passions, and especially in following the desire "to know good and evil" without the instruction of the Light within.[2] This wilful course of disobedience brought blindness and so loss of right knowledge of the Christ within. But every new-born soul starts out "clean from the hands of God," pure and undefiled as Adam was, "in the same condition as our first parents," and our "fall" in each case is due to the same steps of mistake and

[1] *Foster's Reports*, ii. p. 420. Quoted in substance.

[2] Adam appears to have been dualistic like the rest of us. By "nature" he is mere man; by a reception of Christ he might have become divine.

disobedience as his was (*Q.* i. 54-56). Adam did nothing to determine my sin—"I have never felt any loss from Adam's sin"—in fact he thinks the child's "immediate parents" are far more responsible for his transgressions than the remote first parents were (*Q.* ii. 226; *Q.* iv. 112). All sin originates not in an inheritance from Adam, but in the self-will of the "creature" in turning away from the Light of God, the eternal Christ, within the soul. Sin is living and acting on one's own initiative—it consists in following the bent of "the natural heart," instead of conforming to the will of Christ inwardly revealed (*J.* 181, 182, 298). It is the true destiny and vocation of man to follow the available Light in his own soul, to turn his earthly "probation" to good result and to rise out of innocence into positive virtue. He wrote in 1820:

> I believe that the Almighty Creator of the Universe, never had but one sole purpose and design, in creating man, and placing him on this terraqueous globe; and that was to do his will, and thereby to continue in a state of happy union and communion with him, through the spirit. And he did so order and arrange all things here on earth, in his wisdom and goodness, as to constitute a state of probation to man, during his militant state, or while his immortal soul continued in connexion with these mortal bodies; which were not to continue any longer in existence, than during the time of this *probationary scene*; *which was necessary to give the rational intelligent creature Man a fit opportunity to rise above that innocent state in which he was created, to the exalted state of virtue and glory*, by a just and righteous improvement of the liberty and power conferred upon him by his gracious Creator, for that purpose, and that purpose only, agreeably to the instruction of Divine Wisdom.[1]

As he refused to admit that sin was "inherited," so also he refused to admit that righteousness was ever "imputed." "I hope," he said, "there are none so ignorant as to suppose that they can be saved by Christ's imputed righteousness. How derogatory is the idea to the dignity of the Almighty; it rises near unto blasphemy" (*Q.* i. 18). "The only righteousness that

[1] *A Doctrinal Epistle* (printed New York, Phila., and Baltimore, 1824), pp. 17, 18.

ever saved an individual in the world" is "obedience to the manifestation of the will of God in him" (*Q.* i. 45).

"The mode of redemption generally held by professing Christians," he wrote in 1820, "as being effected by the death, or outward dying of Christ Jesus upon the outward wooden cross . . . I consider a vulgar error, that came in with the apostasy from primitive Christianity. The redemption effected by this outward offering would only, according to the true analogy of things, be a redemption of outward bodies. . . . I consider that the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, on the outward cross, applied only, as a matter of redemption, to the Israelites, redeeming them from the curse of [the legal] covenant and the penalties attendant on every breach thereof. This outward redemption was the top-stone of that figurative dispensation, as by it that dispensation, with all its legal rites and ceremonies, was abolished and done away."[1]

This outward offering was, he believed, "a figure of the inward redemption of the soul from sin by the life or spiritual blood of Christ, inwardly sprinkling our consciences and enabling us to die to sin as He died for sin, by which we are redeemed from dead works to serve the living God in newness of life, which makes the true Christian."[2]

The famous letter to Phebe Willis contains his positive doctrine on the subject:

I believe nothing ever did or ever will atone for spiritual corruption but the entire death of that from whence the corruption originated which is the corrupt will. And the life that the creature has generated in him by that will must be slain by the sword of the Spirit which stands in the way to Eden and must die and be annihilated on the cross. That is the true atonement which the creature cannot effect for himself, only as he submits to the operation of the life and spirit of Christ, which will enable the willing and obedient to do it. The outward atonement was a figure of it, which, with the outward example of Jesus Christ in His righteous works and pious death, gives strength to the faithful to make this necessary offering and sacrifice by which his sin is blotted out and he is again reconciled to his maker.[3]

[1] *A Doctrinal Epistle*, pp. 10-12. [2] *Ibid.* p. 14.

[3] *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 421. Here he was in very close accord with the view of the early Friends.

There is thus, he held, nothing in the way of divine forgiveness, nothing to be paid off, nothing requiring "satisfaction." All that God asks for is complete repentance and surrender of will—when we are ready to die on the inward cross of self-will, *that* is full atonement (*Q.* i. 196; ii. 171, 172).

The work of Jesus Christ, as we have seen, he holds to be entirely figurative. The real, true cross is the Light, Life and Spirit in the soul, reproving for sin and calling for the crucifixion of self-will—the outward wooden cross is a Jewish symbol (*Q.* i. 207). So, too, "the blood" of Jesus is only a figure. The life of Christ in the soul is the very spiritual life-blood of the soul. Material blood, made of the dust of the earth, cannot affect the soul, cannot cleanse away sin. "It is only the life and blood of God that ever changed a soul from sin; for there is no other blood but the life of God that can wash the soul from sin" (*Q.* i. 41; i. 258).

Salvation, in its true meaning, is the birth and creation in man of a new self, of the Christ-nature—the birth of the immortal spirit which sways and controls and governs the whole man and forms him into a son of God.

> God is Spirit, and nothing but Spirit. And when this Spirit, or God, acts or operates upon the spirit of man, in his first operations he quickens and enlightens man's spirit, and in this operation he bears record of his own life in the soul of man, as the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost. And, as the spirit of man yields to and submits to his operation, there is a birth of God brought forth in the spirit of man, and by which he now bears record of his own life in the soul as father; and this birth of God in the soul being begotten by God, unites in record, or witness, in unity with God as son; and still it is only God, working all in all in the soul, agreeably to his will and pleasure.[1]

These doctrines quite obviously would not square with the prevailing orthodox standards of the early nineteenth century. The variation from evangelical standards amounted to a complete break, even to revolution, though his deviation from Quaker standards is not so sharply

[1] *A Doctrinal Epistle*, p. 30.

marked or radical. In some points Elias Hicks has introduced novelty, and in many points he has increased the emphasis on the inner Light and put an added strain upon it, but he has not advanced much beyond the positions held by some of his immediate Quaker predecessors. He was no more emphatic in his denial of "imputed righteousness" and "original sin" than was Job Scott. He produced a *shock* by boldly uttering the negations that had always been involved in the doctrine of the inner Light, but which Friends of former times had kept subconscious and suppressed. The positive side of his teaching had been expounded again and again by pillar Friends from the founders down to his day. The real trouble lay (1) in his bold and unrestrained emphasis; (2) in the difficulties inherent in the doctrine of the inner Light itself; and (3) in the theological transformation through which the Society was passing.

Elias Hicks was a vigorous, dynamic individual who spoke out in clear tones what others, if they had believed as he did, would have shaded down with qualifying words and a hedging manner. He had no fears and he went straight through to his conclusions without any inhibitions or hedging tendencies. The result was that a new emphasis appeared in his teaching, and the emphasis was all on one aspect of truth. Everything for him which concerned the spiritual life of man began, progressed and was consummated in the soul of man through the co-working Light and Grace of God, or eternal Christ. Having settled that central point in his own mind, he made everything else fit this theory. Externals were for him of little account, and the best they could do was to serve as "figures." The Scriptures, the historic Christ, the Church of the ages, the faiths of Christendom, systems and organizations, shrank to the smallest possible place of service and man stood alone with God in his own inner shrine. What a man did with this momentous revelation in his own soul was the only all-important thing in the universe. Hicks was honest and in dead earnest, but his perspective was faulty, his emphasis was wrong,

his negatives were out of balance and he made a fragment of truth do service for the immense reality which would make genuine religion an integral and rounded whole.

But this serious, honest man, who roused such a storm, was not alone to blame for the misplaced emphasis. Nobody in the Society of Friends had adequately faced the implications and the difficulties involved in the doctrine of the inner Light, and nobody on the other hand reached any true comprehension of the relation of historical revelation to the Light within the individual soul.[1] Individual Friends used one or the other source of authority as suited their convenience or bent of mind. For a whole generation the Society had tacked, like a ship sailing against the wind, in a curious zig-zag, back and forth from Scripture to inner Light and from inner Light to Scripture. The following extract from the Introduction to the *Christian Advices* of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, published in 1808, helps the reader to realize how the body at large could still insist upon the inner authority.

"Our ancient Friends and their faithful successors to the present day," this document says, "have earnestly laboured to turn the attention of all to this pure spirit [the inner "Principle of Light and Life," as the document calls it], knowing from experience that it is the means appointed by God for effecting our salvation, and the only foundation of true religion and worship."

Elias Hicks differed from other Friends in this particular that he did not veer from a straight course. He early came to the conclusion that there were not two bases of authority, but *one*, not two sources of revelation, but *one*. He was not afraid of logical consequences, and he risked everything on his one pivotal idea. He came to trouble and he brought trouble to the Society not because he was an intentional revolutionist or an innovator, but because he refused to continue the zig-zag method and insisted on making the authority, which Quaker tradition had always accepted, the *only* authority in religion. His generation had not yet worked out an adequate basis for the authority

[1] I make no distinction between the phrases "inner Light," "inward Light" and "Light within."

of the Spirit, neither had he nor his contemporaries found their way to a correspondingly right basis for Scripture authority.

But even this increased emphasis which Elias Hicks put on the authority of the inner Light would have passed without producing a cataclysm if the Society itself had not been undergoing a more or less unconscious change. A large element of the Society had ceased to veer for another reason. It had settled upon the other basis of authority and was steering by that. Gradually a group of influential leaders was shaping the Society in the direction of orthodox theology. The dangers and difficulties involved in following the Light within led them to emphasize the solidity of Scripture authority and the value of the settled and tested Christian faith of the ages. As they swung over toward the safe anchorage which orthodox faith had provided they became wary and suspicious of everything that varied from it. They were quick and sensitive to feel the slightest variations from the straight line of "sound doctrine" and they resolved to keep the Society *pure*. The ominous result was the sharp drawing of lines and the formation of divisive parties. It will be noticed as the story unfolds that it was the drafting of an extreme evangelical document by the Meeting for Sufferings, which finally produced the intense storm-centre.

It has often been contended that there would have been no separation in America if English Friends of intense orthodox sympathies had not visited this country in the period of crisis and added fuel to the flames. This contention has much historic ground to support it. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that American sentiment on these momentous theological issues showed marked cleavage even without any foreign stimulus. There would have been a serious storm even if no Quaker visitors had crossed the Atlantic; whether unassisted it would have become a "euroclydon" and wrecked the ship no mortal can now tell.

Stephen Grellet, so far as I can discover, was the first person to raise his voice against the teachings of Elias

Hicks. As early as 1808, as we have seen, Grellet wrote in his *Memoirs* of "deep and painful trials" over the "advanced sentiments" of Elias Hicks, "repugnant to the Christian faith," especially in his tendency to "lessen the authority of the holy Scriptures" and to "undervalue the sacred offices of our holy and blessed Redeemer."

"Though his assertions," Grellet writes, "were often so covered that few understood him fully, I frequently, fervently, and earnestly laboured with him. He promised that he would be more guarded; but vain promises they were and several times I felt constrained publicly to disavow the unchristian doctrine that he advanced. . . . I think it is three years since, when, at a public meeting in this city [New York], after he had advanced some such sentiments, I felt it my place (in that meeting) to open and explain the subject, how, as a religious Society, we had uniformly received and maintained the fundamental Christian truths, in harmony with clear Scripture doctrine." [1]

At this date Stephen Grellet was the foremost evangelical influence in the Society of Friends in America. Coming in as he did from the outside, and recovering as he did from the deep sloughs of deistic scepticism, he went strongly in the direction of emphatic evangelical faith. He would be more likely than any one else to feel something missing in Elias Hicks' interpretation of Christianity. Warm, intense, powerful, Grellet moved his listeners and carried them with him. There can be no question that his influence with American Friends was very great. He was everywhere received as a gifted Minister and his opinion carried much weight. There was coming to be in all the Yearly Meetings in America a large number of Friends who were evangelical in spirit, like this convinced Frenchman who had become for them "a prophet whom the Lord had raised up in these latter days," and who like him endured "deep and painful trials" over "advanced views."

The English Friends who visited America in the ten years of crisis (1818–1828) were William Forster, George Withy, Isaac Stephenson, Anna Braithwaite, Elizabeth

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 142, 143.

Robson, George and Ann Jones, and, most important of all, the quietist-Quaker, Thomas Shillitoe. They were all intensely evangelical in their theological sympathies, and they were profoundly convinced that they were "sent" to proclaim the orthodox faith and to arouse what seemed to them the sleeping Church to rally to the one standard. They preached doctrine unsparingly, and they spoke with great plainness of speech of what seemed to them heresy.

As early as 1805 an attempt had been inaugurated by the Meeting for Sufferings in Philadelphia to unite all the Yearly Meetings in America in the preparation of a uniform Discipline. This plan was frequently revived, and, as the divergences increased, in 1817 the proposal was made that a conference of all the Yearly Meetings in this continent should be called, in the hope that such a step would promote uniformity of faith and doctrine in the Society. The English Friends who were in America were strongly in favour of this plan, and even after it had failed to carry in the eastern Yearly Meetings, William Forster revived it in Ohio in 1821. But Friends could not at this time unite on this or any plan for promoting uniformity, and the attempt to secure it only hurried forward the separation which William Forster solemnly predicted more than two years before it occurred.[1]

The first definite indication of public disapproval Elias Hicks received was given, though in a mild way, in Philadelphia in 1819. He was returning from a religious visit in Ohio and on his way home he stopped for a short service in Philadelphia, and during this sojourn he attended two Monthly Meetings in the city. According to his own account they were "crowded" meetings, "many of the people being obliged to stand outside the door." "A precious solemnity covered those large promiscuous gatherings, and truth was raised into dominion."[2] At Pine Street Monthly Meeting he spoke "pretty close doctrine to some who stood as rulers or leaders among the people"

[1] *Narrative of the Causes which led to the Separation*, p. 37. Quoted in Janney's *History of the Friends* (Phila., 1867), vol. iv. pp. 177, 178.

[2] *Journal*, p. 382.

and intimated that "they were going round and round, as it were, like the Children of Israel, and not advancing forward." He then "called upon the young people, in a very affectionate manner not to rest in the tradition of the fathers but to go forward and advance the work of reformation." [1]

After he had thus relieved his mind in the men's meeting, he "expressed a concern" to visit the women's meeting. The permission was granted with some slight expression of disapproval, but while Elias Hicks was speaking to the women, the men, at the suggestion of Jonathan Evans, a prominent Elder, who said that the meeting had been a painful one to him, proposed to adjourn, and in fact separated, without waiting for the return of the visiting Minister, an occurrence which the friends of Hicks treated as an open insult to their leader. Elias himself humorously remarked, when he came back and found the men gone: "It was kind of them to leave my coat behind when they went." [2]

A much more definite and carefully matured opposition to him appeared in Philadelphia in 1822. Joseph Whitall had that year attended New York Yearly Meeting and in an interview with Elias Hicks had been deeply impressed with his "unsoundness." [3] He had reported his "uneasiness" to certain Elders in Philadelphia, who resolved to act. When Elias arrived in Philadelphia in December, returning from a southern trip, a number of Elders expressed their desire to have a private interview. He, however, took with him a small group of his friends and supporters and thereupon the Elders, standing on their disciplinary right to a "select" meeting, refused to proceed. Ten Elders drew up and signed a brief document charging him with "holding and promulgating doctrines different from and repugnant to those held by our religious Society," and these Elders concluded their document with these challenging words: "We feel it a duty to declare that we

[1] This account is taken from the testimony of Halliday Jackson. *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 39.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 40.

[3] See Joseph Whitall's testimony in the Trenton trial. *Foster's Reports*, vol. i. pp. 213 *seq.*

cannot have religious unity with thy conduct nor with the doctrines thou art charged with promulgating." [1]

Here was the place where a loving spirit, tender appreciation and methods of reconciliation would have worked wonders if only those Elders had known how to employ such forces. This was the critical moment and here was the watershed that shaped the course of the coming movements. The inability to maintain "unity," which meant to these Elders uniformity of doctrine, pushed them over into positive opposition to the man whose immense vogue and influence disturbed them. The immediate effect of this action of the Elders was the aligning of the two parties in a much more definite way than before. Most Friends were from now on loyal sympathizers of Hicks *or* supporters of the opposing Elders.

In 1823 the situation was made more acute by an action of the Philadelphia Meeting for Sufferings. An extensive discussion had taken place in a public paper published in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1822, between a person who interpreted the radical views prevailing among Friends, and who signed himself "Paul," and another person who came forward as the champion of the views of the "orthodox" Friends and signed himself "Amicus." [2] When these articles were gathered into a book, the positions of "Amicus" seemed so unsatisfactory to some members of the Meeting for Sufferings that they proposed the preparation of an official statement of Friends' views. This proposed statement of belief was prepared by a committee of the Meeting for Sufferings and consisted of "extracts from various approved authors" of the Society of Friends. It was a thoroughly orthodox confession of faith, dealing most emphatically with the points in controversy—the authority of the Scriptures, the divinity of Jesus Christ and justification through the propitiatory

[1] Elias Hicks answered their communication, and the Elders thereupon wrote a second letter. The two letters written by the Elders to Elias Hicks are printed in *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. pp. 479, 480.

[2] *Letters of Paul and Amicus* [originally published in *The Christian Repository*, Wilmington, Delaware], Wilmington and Philadelphia, 1828. "Paul" was Rev. E. W. Gilbert, a Presbyterian, and "Amicus" was Benjamin Ferris, assisted by Evan Lewis and Dr. William Gibbons.

sacrifice of Jesus Christ.[1] Confessions of faith are always battle-documents. They are drawn up with a bias. They express one side of a controversy and they proclaim, in words supposed to be from the founders of the faith, that all who disagree are unsound and dangerous. The statement was adopted by the Meeting for Sufferings and an edition was printed for circulation.

When the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings were read for approval in the Yearly Meeting of 1823 a great storm was raised, for it was at once recognized that when these minutes were approved, this statement of doctrine would stand as the official position of the Yearly Meeting. Samuel Bettle, the Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, said at the Trenton trial that "the excitement was so considerable that the meeting adjourned until next morning."[2]

"When the meeting assembled next morning," Samuel Bettle continues, "it was proposed that the extracts should be stricken off the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings; objection was made to that, on the ground that it would be a disavowal of the doctrines held by Friends, these extracts being taken from the writings of approved Friends. Very considerable difficulty occurred in the meeting from the persevering objections of a number of individuals, every one of them, every individual of whom, for I sat in a position to see and know them all, have since gone off in the separation. I was at the table as Clerk—it was my duty to serve the meeting: perceiving the embarrassment the meeting was in, on the one hand to expunge, and on the other a desire to retain, I arose and stated to the meeting my duty and wish to act as its servant; and after presenting to the meeting the state of the case, as I apprehended it at that time, I proposed to them to avoid both difficulties by simply suspending the publication; not taking it off the minutes, and not circulating the pamphlets, but leaving the subject. This proposition was finally acquiesced in, and the business so settled."[3]

From this time until the separation was consummated the sympathizers with Elias Hicks were strongly arrayed against the two solid pillars of the ancient system—the authority of the Elders and the Meeting for Sufferings.

[1] These "extracts" are printed in *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. pp. 414-416.
[2] *Foster's Reports*, vol. i. p. 72. [3] *Ibid.* vol. i, p. 72.

The Elders — conservative, cautious, the preservers and defenders of custom, adverse to innovation—were determined to stem the rising tide. They were like a solid stone wall against the current. On their side, too, were the other solid institutions which a conservative past had builded—the Discipline and the Meeting for Sufferings. There was no way for the liberal forces to succeed without a radical conflict with these established systems, admirably formed to conserve the ancient *status quo*. In 1826 Elias Hicks came once more on a religious visit to the meetings of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The opposition had become very intense and the devotion of his friends to him had become equally intense. He had a sort of triumphal procession wherever he went, and at the same time the Elders did what they could to check him, so that many of the meetings exhibited scenes of disorder and confusion. The minor details of the sad controversy need not now be rehearsed.

In the autumn of 1826 Thomas Shillitoe came to America. He soon became the vigorous champion of evangelical faith and, outside the group of Philadelphia Elders, the foremost opponent of Elias Hicks. He prayed when he landed in New York that "quietness might cover his mind as a canopy" and that he "might be preserved from taking any premature step."[1] He found himself at once in a storm-centre and however "quiet" he may have been inwardly, he was outwardly in an almost continuous cyclone for the period of his American visit. He reports that a great effort was at first made to draw him into fellowship with Hicks and his friends but he swung over to the opposite extreme, and soon found himself very "obnoxious" to that party.[2] He was the very embodiment of dedication to inward guidance. He lived in a state of "strippedness," as he called it, and of palpitating sensitiveness to the divine will and that made him seem to the conservative wing a heaven-sent messenger to strengthen the hands and minds of the faithful.

The other party also had its "saint," who played a

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 151. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 154 and 248.

foremost rôle in the strange drama. This was John Comly, a recorded Minister and assistant Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. His *Journal* is full of incidents which reveal in him the same quietistic spirit that was strong in Shillitoe, and he, too, endeavoured faithfully to follow the celestial light. As conditions grew acute he felt his course marked out for him.

"My mind was opened to see," he declares, "that this contest would result in a separation of the two conflicting parts of the Society, as the only means of saving the whole from a total wreck and the way and manner of this separation was clearly unfolded to my mental vision; that on the part of Friends it must be effected in the peaceable spirit of the non-resisting Lamb —first by ceasing from the spirit of contention and strife, and then uniting together in the support of the order and discipline of the Society of Friends, separate and apart from those who had introduced the difficulties, and who claimed to be the orthodox part of the Society." [1]

With this clear purpose he started out to bring together and organize those who were opposed to the adoption of theological standards for the Society of Friends and those who felt that the narrowness and restraint of the Elders should be resisted. He went forth to his strange task with his mind "clothed with peace in the discharge of this duty." [2] He says that he felt he was called as Moses was, to "lead the afflicted and oppressed from under hard task-masters," and to enable "the Seed of life to grow in the lives of thousands who were under oppression." [3] During the early spring of 1827, on his own statement, he "actively promoted separation" and laid careful preparations for the crisis of the coming Yearly Meeting in April. [4] He was from the time of what he believed to be his "vision" a leader of the forces on his side and the guiding spirit of the liberal wing.

The Yearly Meeting of 1827 proved indeed to be a "crisis." The first overt sign of the storm appeared in the selection of the Clerk. At the close of the first

[1] Comly's *Journal*, p. 309. [2] *Ibid.* p. 310. [3] *Ibid.* p. 311.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 312-319, and Halliday Jackson's testimony. *Foster's Reports*, vol. i. pp. 58-60.

session of the meeting the representatives from the Quarterly Meetings were, after the usual procedure, requested to meet and nominate persons to serve the meeting as Clerks. It appeared that some of the Quarterly Meetings which were in sympathy with Elias Hicks had, in preparation for the crisis, greatly increased (most of the accounts say "doubled") the usual number of their representatives. Those of the Hicks party endeavoured to nominate John Comly as Clerk, and the other group put forward the former Clerk, Samuel Bettle. As Friends did not settle such matters by vote but "in unity" and no unity could be arrived at, the representatives reported that they could not agree upon a Clerk.

When this report was made to the Yearly Meeting at four o'clock in the afternoon, an elderly Friend rose and stated that he had attended the Yearly Meeting since the year 1767 and that the practice had always obtained for the former Clerks to continue to serve until the meeting agreed upon new ones, and he thereupon proposed that the present Clerks should act. Many persons approved this course, though there was some opposition, and Halliday Jackson, a prominent supporter of Elias Hicks, and some others urged that the meeting should adjourn until the representatives could agree upon Clerks for the meeting. Finally Samuel Bettle read the minute which he had made continuing the former Clerks. This action was followed by a tumultuous shout and a scene of confusion, but gradually the meeting gathered into order again and John Comly was asked to take his seat by Samuel Bettle, which he hesitated to do, though he at length yielded "in condescension" to the requests of his friends. The quietness was hardly restored when a Friend with uplifted arms and excited manner cried out: "Let us separate—we had better separate." Before the afternoon session closed, however, "a peaceful quiet spread over the meeting" and, as an eye-witness reports, "the presence of ancient Goodness was graciously felt." Throughout the subsequent sessions of the Yearly Meeting there were frequent occasions of tumult and disorder, and efforts were

made to bring about an adjournment, or, as the Orthodox claimed, a dissolution of the meeting, but these times of disturbance were followed by periods of real solemnity when the business proceeded almost as in former years. It was, however, only too obvious that there were two distinct and separate parties which were felt to be irreconcilable.

The climax was reached at the closing session on the morning of 21st April. Near the end of the meeting two women came into the men's meeting and being conducted to the Ministers' gallery, announced that the women's meeting "under a weighty concern and solid deliberation" had united in the appointment of a committee to visit the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of the Yearly Meeting—the purpose being to restore unity and harmony in the flock. The friends of Elias Hicks expressed strong disapprobation with the proposal, some declaring that this scheme had not originated with the women. While those for and against the proposal were expressing their views, a Friend of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting arose and said he thought he ought to inform the meeting that a number of persons who were now present had held a meeting the evening before at Green Street meeting house, that they had organized a separate meeting and had prepared an address signed by some of their representatives to be sent down to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings. He stated further that the gathering had been called, "A meeting of many of the Representatives of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and other Friends convened at Green Street," and that this Green Street meeting had decided to appoint a committee to carry the address, which it had adopted, down to the subordinate meetings and to families and to explain the nature of and the necessity for the measure.

This announcement electrified the Yearly Meeting and produced a profound stir throughout the house. It now appeared that a break in the ranks, which had for some time seemed inevitable and imminent, had actually occurred. The committee suggested by the women's meeting was after much deliberation appointed; then

during an impressive silence, the Clerk read the minutes of the sessions and the meeting concluded in great solemnity—it being the last time the two opposing groups of Friends were to meet together as one organic body.[1]

The conferences at Green Street, referred to above, were held on the 19th, 20th and 21st of April, in intervals between the sessions of the Yearly Meeting. According to John Comly, who was the leader of the movement to separate, there were about two hundred at the first conference, six hundred at the second and seven or eight hundred at the last one, which definitely prepared the step for "a quiet retreat" from the scenes of confusion.[2] The address adopted at the third conference set forth this principle: "God alone is sovereign Lord of conscience and with its unalienable right, no power, civil or ecclesiastical, should ever interfere." It further declared: "We feel bound to endeavour to preserve it ["our religious Society, possessed of this important spiritual inheritance"] unfettered by the hand of man, and unalloyed with prescribed modes of faith, framed in the wisdom and the will of the creature."

The document then proceeded to call for definite action toward a separation in the following words:

> It is under a solemn and deliberate view of this painful state of our affairs, that we feel bound to express to you, under a settled conviction of mind, that the period has fully come in which we ought to look toward making a quiet retreat from this scene of confusion, and we therefore recommend to you deeply to weigh the momentous subject, and to adopt such a course as truth, under solid and solemn deliberation, may point to, in furtherance of this object, that our society may again enjoy the free exercise of its rights and privileges. And we think proper to remind you, that we have no new gospel to preach; nor any other foundation to lay than that already laid, and proclaimed by our forefathers, even "Christ within, the hope of glory"—"the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Neither have we any other system of discipline to propose, than that which we already

[1] I have drawn for this account of the Y. M. of 1827 upon a manuscript account of the sessions written by a Friend who was present. It was afterwards read and verified by many who had been present.

[2] Comly's *Journal*, pp. 328-333.

possess, believing that, whilst we sincerely endeavour to live and walk consistently with our holy profession, and to administer it in the spirit of forbearance and love, it will be found sufficient for the government of the church. And whilst we cherish a reasonable hope to see our Zion, under the divine blessing, loosen herself "from the bands of her neck," and put on her strength, and Jerusalem her "beautiful garments," and our annual and other assemblies again crowned with that quietude and peace which become our christian profession; we feel an ardent desire that in all our proceedings tending to this end, our conduct toward all our brothers may, on every occasion, be marked with love and forbearance: that when reviled, we bless: when defamed, we entreat; and when persecuted, that we suffer it.[1]

The conference adjourned to meet as a general meeting the first Monday in June. On this occasion those who met prepared an Epistle which reviewed the stages of growth of "the desolating spirit" and gave the reasons for withdrawing.[2]

"The quiet and solemnity of our meetings for divine worship," they say, "the blessings of a gospel ministry unshackled by human authority—the preservation of our religious liberty—the advancement of our Christian testimonies—and the prosperity of Truth, so far as it is connected with our labours, we believe, very much depend upon the early adoption of this measure. We therefore, under a solemn and weighty sense of the importance of this concern, and with ardent desires that all our movements may be under the guidance of Him who only can lead us in safety, have agreed to propose for your consideration, the propriety and expediency of holding a Yearly Meeting of Friends in unity with us, residing within the limits of those Quarterly Meetings, hereto-

[1] *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 454.

[2] The Epistle uses this word "withdrawing," and in the early stages of the division expressions were employed which recognized a movement to "separate." But after the event there was a manifest desire on the part of liberal Friends to be regarded as the genuine successors of the early Friends, and as preserving a true continuity with the Quakerism of history. As this attitude spread and grew there naturally sprang up a corresponding desire to avoid all implications of having made a "separation," or of setting up "a new Society." Both branches claimed to be "the Society of Friends." For the sake of convenience the names "Hicksites" and "Orthodox" Friends have come into popular use, but they have no official standing or recognition. In the "Trenton trial," held in 1830, the New Jersey court of chancery on a legal basis decided in favour of the "Orthodox" as the main-line successors of the undivided society. In the New York suit the chancellor was unable to discover any sufficient difference in doctrine to establish the "Orthodox" claim to the line of true descent. The volumes called *Foster's Reports*, frequently cited in this chapter, contain the testimony given on both sides in the "Trenton trial."

fore represented in the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia; for which purpose, it is recommended that Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, which may be prepared for such a measure, should appoint representatives to meet in Philadelphia, on the third second-day in the tenth month next, at ten o'clock in the morning, in company with other members favourable to our views, there to hold a Yearly Meeting of men and women Friends, upon the principles of the early professors of our name, and for the same purpose that brought them together in a religious capacity—to exalt the standard of Truth—promote righteousness and peace in the earth—edify the churches—and generally to attend to all such concerns as relate to the welfare of religious society, and the cause of our holy Redeemer, who is God over all, blessed for ever. AMEN."[1]

While the formative steps were being taken by John Comly and his friends, intense feeling was growing ever more intense between the two parties and definite operations were being launched on both sides to control the situation. The Friends of the Orthodox branch took the ground that all who were in sympathy with the movement to "separate" or held the views which they now considered "unsound" should be eliminated from membership and the Society should thus be reduced, by a radical surgical operation, to a "remnant" composed of the pure and faithful. This root and branch course of action involved much personal tragedy and many pitiable family divisions, and it undoubtedly resulted in carrying many of the middle-of-the-road members over into the liberal branch. The proceedings, in meetings where the winnowing was carried through, were often marked with disorder, and there were scenes enacted which had best be left as far as possible in kindly oblivion. Property as well as doctrine became everywhere an issue, and each of the claimant twins wished to stand before the world as the child of blessing.

In total numbers the liberal Friends had much the advantage. In the country meetings the proportion in their favour was fully three to one. In the city of Philadelphia the Orthodox branch was strongly in the

[1] Comly's *Journal*, p. 632.

majority.[1] This proportion presents an anomalous situation. Usually the rural districts are strongly conservative.

[1] The actual figures as they were presented at the "Trenton trial" were somewhat discrepant. The "Hicksites" gave the following estimates for the different Quarterly Meetings:

| | | Total |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, including men, women and minors | 2676 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto | 2643 | |
| Number of neutrals, or those undecided . . . | 14 | 5333 |
| 2. Abington Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, including men, women and minors | 2829 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto | 321 | |
| Number of neutrals, or undecided . . . . | 3 | 3153 |
| 3. Bucks Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 2831 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 489 | |
| Number of neutrals, or undecided . . . . | 16 | 3336 |
| 4. Concord Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 2573 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 788 | |
| Number of neutrals, or undecided . . . . | 75 | 3436 |
| 5. Western Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 2296 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 454 | |
| Number of neutrals, or undecided . . . . | 70 | 2820 |
| 6. Caln Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 921 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 557 | |
| Number of neutrals, or undecided . . . . | 175 | 1653 |
| The numbers in the following Quarterly Meetings ascertained under commissions issued from the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania for the Eastern District: | | |
| 7. Southern Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 501 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 30 | 531 |
| 8. Burlington Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 1049 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 800 | 1849 |
| 9. Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 821 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 789 | |
| Number of neutrals, or undecided . . . . | 76 | 1686 |
| 10. Salem Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 1238 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 298 | 1536 |
| 11. Shrewsbury and Rahway Quarterly Meeting— | | |
| Number of Friends, men, women and minors . . | 750 | |
| Number of those called Orthodox ditto . . | 175 | 925 |
| Total . . | | 26,258 |
| Aggregate of Friends within the Yearly Meeting as far as ascertained, up to 1829 . . . . . | | 18,485 |
| Aggregate of those called Orthodox, to same period . . . . | | 7,344 |
| Aggregate of neutrals, or undecided, to same period . . . . | | 429 |
| | | 26,258 |

(*Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. pp. 461, 462.)

They are very slow to respond to change in authority or in ideas. They do not encourage innovation. They are for the *status quo*. Why, then, did the country go with Elias Hicks and the city lean hard toward orthodoxy? There is of course no one simple answer, since the situation itself was extremely complex.

There had long existed in the country meetings a feeling, no less strong because held in constraint, that the authority of the city Elders and of the city meetings in general was far out of proportion to their numerical membership. The younger Friends were restive under what seemed to them unwarranted interference with individual liberty, and under what actually was a static and machine-like system which gave little scope for fresh light and for expanding life. There were, too, many of the younger class on whom the concerns of the stricter, sterner Friends rested lightly, who were tired of the burdens and of "the cross," which the serious disciplinarians of the Society were disposed to lay upon them. They were not keen about the theological issues, one way or the other. They did, however, welcome a movement which pointed in the direction of larger freedom for the country meetings and larger individual liberty for the new generation.

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Against these figures the "Orthodox Friends" made the following estimate for Quarterly Meetings where they believe the "Hicksite" figures were excessive (*Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 495):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, with the exception of Exeter, which has not yet been heard from, and where the members are not very unequal . . | Friends | 3317 |
| | Hicksites | 2077 |
| Caln Quarterly Meeting . . . . . | Friends | 952 |
| | Hicksites | 702 |
| Burlington Quarterly Meeting . . . . . | Friends | 1188 |
| | Hicksites | 937 |
| Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting . . . . . | Friends | 1097 |
| | Hicksites | 644 |
| Salem Quarterly Meeting . . . . . | Friends | 454 |
| | Hicksites | 1149 |
| Shrewsbury and Rahway Quarterly Meeting . . . | Friends | 233 |
| | Hicksites | 614 |
| | Neutrals | 41 |

A study of the proportion of the two parties in the city of Philadelphia is given in an article in *The Friend* (Phila.), vol. ii. pp. 141, 142. This article gives 2926 "Orthodox" Friends and 1461 "Hicksites."

It is in this connection interesting to note that the persons who constituted the "official" class in the Yearly Meeting remained in large majority in the "Orthodox" group. Out of a total of 649 Ministers and Elders, 389 remained "Orthodox" and 260 joined with the "Hicksites." Of the 52 members of the Meeting for Sufferings—the pillar of Discipline at the time of the separation—only ten went with the liberals.[1] It gave a certain sense of permanence and solidity to the "Orthodox" party that it carried on such a large and weighty element of the office-bearers and spiritually seasoned persons, but it emphasizes at the same time the fact that there was a line of cleavage between those who embodied the Discipline and those who felt its burden.

There were, furthermore, undoubtedly many who honestly believed that Elias Hicks, and the movement in sympathy with him, represented the past more truly than did the theology of the Philadelphia Elders. To them the central idea of Quakerism was obedience to the Light and not the adoption of doctrine. The emphasis on doctrine seemed like an innovation—the insistence on the Life and Light of Christ within, as the all-important fact of religion, seemed like an unbroken alliance with the Quaker worthies of history.[2]

Finally the rigid and merciless application of Discipline in the case of all who leaned toward "separation" or who sympathized with the liberal views eliminated from the orthodox fold many who would have quietly remained if the way had been made easy for them. It was a new insistence on the stern and untempered use of the winnowing principle; "he that is not for me is against me," and in this case the advocates of it hewed to the line. There was to be no "fringe"!

This pitiable "separation" was, as I have already said,

[1] See interesting article in *The Friend* (Phila.), vol. ii. pp. 141, 142.

[2] The "Orthodox" party, however, made much of an unfortunate phrase which John Comly used in the Green Street "Address," and which looked like the adoption of doctrine on the part of the "Hicksites." The passage referred to is this: Doctrines held by one part of society, and which *we* believe sound and edifying, are pronounced by the other part to be unsound and spurious" (Comly's *Journal*, p. 628).

a *tragedy* of Quaker history. It was an inevitable collision of intellectual and emotional forces, of prejudices, traditions, and attitudes, as well as of personalities who could not understand one another. There was no "right" side in the issue over against another side which was just as surely "wrong." It was not a separation in which it was easy without more ado, to distinguish one side as "sheep" and the other as "goats." It is obvious that the theology of one side was in line with the standards which characterize the great protestant denominations. If orthodoxy in belief, then, were the main mark of fellowship with Christ and the essential feature of historical Quakerism, one branch in the division must have been called "right" and the other "wrong," but if Christianity is an infinitely deeper and richer thing than doctrine —if it is a way of life ever expanding with the enlarging revelation of the ages—then the "right" was not all on one side. In that case both sides exhibited some appreciation of what is eternally right and, alas, both sides showed some signs of a blind-spot in their vision!

The separation in Philadelphia proved to be only the beginning of a widespread movement. When once the schism-habit got launched it was extremely difficult to stop it or to limit it. In most of the other Yearly Meetings of America the same critical situation existed as in Philadelphia. There were two parties in matters of doctrine, and there was in most sections of the country an influential group contending for larger liberty against the domination of the Elders and the conservative forces in the body. Thomas Shillitoe, coming from abroad, exercised large powers of leadership as the Orthodox prophet of the crisis, and had much to do in carrying New York and Ohio Yearly Meeting into open division, though it must be said that the catastrophe would probably have come in both places after separation had occurred in Philadelphia, even without the stimulus which he supplied.

In New York the definite occasion for separatist action

arose in 1828 over the presence in the Yearly Meeting of certain Friends from Philadelphia who had been disowned because of their "Hicksite" affiliations, and so, too, in the other Yearly Meetings that followed throughout the year 1828, the presence of persons considered to be no longer "Friends" hurried the meetings into division. The account given by Thomas Shillitoe of the New York separation is vivid and in the main correct in matters of fact, and it will enable the reader to feel the tragedy of the event. He says:

Second-day morning, 26th of 5th mo. 1828. The Yearly Meeting for the general concerns of the Society assembled; the house was crowded to an unusual degree before the time appointed: the Clerk (Samuel Parsons) opened the Yearly Meeting, which done, I found I must stand upon my feet, and endeavour to lay before the meeting that which I believed my mind had become charged with, although I dreaded making the attempt, being aware, from the conduct some of the leading part of the separatists manifested towards me, that I was become increasingly obnoxious to them, but I durst not keep silence; I therefore rose with nearly these words: "I obtained a certificate from my own Monthly and Quarterly Meeting, also one from the select Yearly Meeting of Friends held in London, expressive of their concurrence with my travelling in the work of the ministry on this continent, which certificates were read in the last Yearly Meeting of New York, and entered on the records of that Yearly Meeting; such being the case, it constitutes me as much a member of this Yearly Meeting as any other member of it; as such I therefore dare do no other than enter my protest against the meeting's proceeding with its business whilst so many persons are in the meeting who have no claim or right to sit in this Yearly Meeting." I was suffered to proceed without interruption, and was humbled under a thankful sense of support, that I had not flinched from the step I had taken. This called forth other Friends in support of the meeting's becoming select before the business of it was gone into; but the disaffected part of the meeting manifested a determination that those who were disqualified to sit in the Yearly Meeting should remain, using many unsound arguments to support them in their determination. Elias Hicks also declared they had a right to sit in this Yearly Meeting. . . . Friends maintaining their ground against the business of the meeting being proceeded in, whilst those who had no right to sit in the meeting were present; the separatists

then ordered the Clerk in a very commanding manner to go on with the business of the meeting, until at last many of them manifested a disposition to become riotous in order to compel his proceeding. A Friend stood up and proposed, such Friends as were desirous of preserving the order of this Yearly Meeting should adjourn to some suitable place to transact the business, which proposal was fully united with by other Friends, but opposed with violence by the separatists. Whilst matters were thus going on, the Clerk, aware that it must terminate in a separation, prepared a minute to that effect—to adjourn to the basement-story of the meeting-house, which he stood up to read; on which an outcry took place. "Don't let him read it,"—"Pull him down";—others calling out, "He is no Clerk of the Yearly Meeting,—we have a Clerk of our own;—the representatives have met, and we have chosen a Clerk": but this being the opening of the Yearly Meeting, the representatives had not yet received their orders from the meeting to meet for that purpose. E. Hicks then called upon their new-chosen Clerk to come forward, which he did over the backs of the forms, and heads and shoulders of Friends, some of whom were incommoded by it: on his reaching the front of the Clerk's table, E. Hicks put out his hand to assist him in gaining admittance to the table, but by some means, he failed, on which some of the Hicksite party turned their newly-chosen Clerk heels first into the Clerk's seat. Attempts were now made to wrest the minute the Clerk had made out of his hands, which they were not able to effect, nor prevent his reading of it; but to preclude what he thus read being heard over the meeting, they struck their sticks against the wall of the house, they stamped on the floor with their feet and umbrellas, they hooted and hissed, and some were heard to swear: the windows being down, the tumult was so great, people outside of the house compared it to thunder at a distance. The minute of the adjournment being read, Friends left the house and went towards the basement-story, but care had been previously taken by the Hicksite party to keep Friends out of this part of the house by locking the doors against them; one of their party threatened Friends with consequences if they attempted an entrance, on which a Friend present proposed our adjourning to the medical college in Duane Street, which accordingly took place. From the solemn manner in which Friends moved slowly along the streets, many strewing their tears on the way, from having left behind them some near relatives and some intimate friends, together with the painful feelings occasioned by the scene of uproar and violence they had so recently escaped, inquiry was made by people, "Was a burial coming?" On reaching the

college, and after taking our seats, a time of silence ensued; praises were vocally offered up to the great Shepherd of Israel for this signal deliverance of his people, when the waters of the Red Sea were made to stand on heaps.[1]

In New York the proportion of two to one in favour of the "Hicksite" Friends was pretty nearly maintained both in city and country. The figures given in *Foster's Reports* are not strictly accurate, but they at least show the general way in which the cleavage ran. These figures give 12,532 "Hicksites," 5913 "Orthodox," and 857 "neutrals."[2]

The stormiest of all the "separations" was that which occurred in Ohio Yearly Meeting. Elias Hicks and Thomas Shillitoe were both in attendance. They had come into collision at local meetings a number of times on the way out to Ohio from New York, especially in the meetings of Western Pennsylvania, and they both realized that the coming Yearly Meeting was to be "a trial of faith," each being absolutely confident that his cause was divinely right. The pioneer settlers in what was then called "the West" were keenly interested in "the Quaker fight," and came in large numbers wherever they heard of meetings that were likely to be exciting. Elias Hicks evidently drew the crowds and was the popular favourite, a preference which Thomas Shillitoe attributes to the widespread prevalence of "deism" in these regions, though it is more probable that the people came out of pure human interest to see a novel spectacle and to hear an unusual speaker. The following account of what happened at the opening of the Yearly Meeting itself is written by Shillitoe, and naturally is coloured by his point of view, but it is a good description by an eye-witness of a sad but memorable event:

First-day morning. Attended the meeting at Mount Pleasant: it may easily be supposed the prospect of going to meeting this morning must have been formidable in appearance: the house

[1] *Journal of Thomas Shillitoe*, vol. ii. pp. 311-313.
[2] *Foster's Reports*, vol. ii. p. 464.

was crowded, and before the meeting was fully gathered, Elias Hicks stood up and occupied much time in setting forth doctrines opposed to all Christian principles. After he had taken his seat, a Friend rose and informed the audience of the situation in which Elias Hicks stood with his friends at home; this he did in order to do away with any unfavourable impressions respecting Friends, which might have been made upon the minds of any from the doctrines which E. H. had advanced. From the great concourse of people we passed in the afternoon on their way to Short Creek meeting, where E. Hicks was to be, I had cherished a hope we should have had a quiet meeting at Mount Pleasant; but we had not long been settled down before two of the preachers of the separatists rose one after the other; on their being requested again and again to sit down, the Hicksite party shouted from various parts of the meeting, manifesting such violence of temper, that it appeared safest to suffer them to go on. Although it was as distressing a meeting as most I ever sat in, yet when it closed I could not say I regretted my lot was thus cast amongst Friends, to share with them in their exercises.

Second-day, 8th of 9th mo. At eight this morning the committee of men and women Friends on Indian affairs met, to which committee strangers were invited, of which number I considered myself to be one. When the business of this committee closed, Friends and the Clerks remained in the house: the time for the gathering of the Yearly Meeting on the general concerns of the Society being nearly come, these Friends filled up the Ministers' gallery and front seats. Printed notices had been served on E. Hicks and others, and copies nailed on the doors of the men's and women's house, signed by the trustees of the property, warning them not to enter the meeting-house during the sittings of the Yearly Meeting; the numerous door-keepers were also in attendance, but the separatists became so violent it appeared no longer possible for the door-keepers to maintain their posts, unless they repelled force by force. Friends conferred together, when it appeared safest to request the door-keepers to desist from their charge and leave the doors; this taking place, the mob, headed by two of the preachers of the separatists, poured into the house like a torrent, accompanied by some of the rude rabble of the town; they violently forced open the doors that had been kept fast—some young men entering the women's house committed the same outrage. After the meeting had become quiet, beyond what could have been expected, all circumstances considered, the Clerk, Jonathan Taylor, opened the Yearly Meeting amidst this crowd of intruders; on which one of the

separatists' party stood up and declared he was authorized by the members of Ohio Yearly Meeting to order the Clerks that were then at the table to quit and give place to such Clerks as they should choose for themselves, at the same time naming an individual for the office, which nomination was confirmed by many of the separatists shouting out at the same time, "That's my mind, that's my mind"; "Why does not our Clerk come forward?" The separatists then crowding between the front seats and up to the table ordered the Friends who were standing near the Clerks' table to quit; but their demand not being complied with, they began to use violence, on which the Clerks were ordered to take down the names of such as appeared to take an active part in such proceedings. The taking down the names of such as were the most active in this riot did not check their proceedings; finding they were not likely to succeed in driving Friends from the front of the table, they endeavoured to do so by a door behind the Clerk: my seat being next to the Clerk, a man of large stature and bulk came over the gallery-rail almost upon me, and after him two young men. I was on the point of getting up to leave the house; but before I was upon my feet, one of the separatists near me, looking up, exclaimed the gallery that was over our heads was falling: a great crash at this moment was heard over our heads, which it was afterwards proved had been produced by one of the separatists' party breaking a piece of wood. Immediately on an alarm being given, "The gallery was falling," from the other side of the house there was an outcry, "The house is falling"; the door of the women's house was thrown open, and they were told the house was falling; a sudden rush in every direction produced a sound not unlike thunder, and brought down a small part of the ceiling in the gallery; this raised a considerable dust, and had the appearance of the walls giving way and the ceiling coming down altogether. Whilst I was making my way from my seat, a Friend informed the meeting it was a false alarm; the separatists, who had crowded into the ministers' gallery and given this alarm, instead of making their way themselves out of the house, called out, "Make way for the old Friend"; others said, "Let the old Friend come by"; so that I had no difficulty until I reached the door, where the crowd was very great. Some were thrown down and were in danger of being trampled to death; a young Friend (who was one amongst many more) told me they forced the sashes out with their feet, and tumbled out of the windows; one young man (report says) in his fright dropped out of an upper window. The separatists having now obtained access to the door at the back of the Clerks' table, voices were heard above the general uproar, "Now is the time, rush on," which they did, but not being

able to get possession of the table, it was broken to pieces.[1] In a short time I returned into the meeting again. When the tumult and uproar had somewhat subsided, it was proposed that we should leave this scene of riot; which being united with, Friends adjourned to Short Creek meeting-house, and the Clerk made a minute stating the cause whereby Friends were brought under the necessity of quitting their own house. On taking our seats in Short Creek house, many minds were afresh contrited before the Lord for his merciful deliverance. The chief subject that occupied attention at this time was what measures Friends were to adopt to secure a peaceable enjoyment of their privileges in holding their meetings select; the names which had been taken down of those who had been the most active in the riots and in breaking the Clerk's table were read over; a very becoming care was manifested on the part of Friends, where mercy could be shown, to strike such names off the list; Friends were called upon to make such statement to the meeting as they would be able to do if brought forward as witnesses in the case before a Court. After which four Friends had it in charge to wait upon a judge at Steubenville to lay before him the situation Friends were placed in, and to deliver to him the names of such as had been the authors of their difficulties.[2]

The division of forces in Ohio was nearly even, and left in this great pioneer field two weak bodies of Friends, where one strong united body might have carried forward a signal spiritual work. In Indiana the main body of Friends remained loyal to the "Orthodox" position, though a small fraction of this newest Yearly Meeting in America—founded in 1821—withdrew and affiliated with the liberal branch. In Baltimore a separation occurred in October of 1828. Here the feeling of hostility was less than in most other sections, though the proportion of "Hicksites" to "Orthodox" was far greater than in any other Yearly Meeting, about four-fifths of the entire membership going with the former party. It is thus obvious that the "Hicksites" had a decided total majority in the meetings that separated. There were, however, three American Yearly Meetings in which no separation of any consequence occurred—New England, North Carolina and the small Yearly Meeting in Virginia. These bodies remained in

[1] In this onset the Clerk had one of his ribs broken.
[2] *Journal of Thomas Shillitoe*, vol. ii. pp. 343-345.

fellowship with the "Orthodox" Yearly Meetings. So also did the parent Yearly Meeting in London, and the body of Irish Friends composing Dublin Yearly Meeting. The decision of English Friends to give their fellowship and sympathetic support to the "Orthodox" bodies in America was hailed by the latter as a tremendous asset of victory. It gave them the air of regularity, and supplied them with a solid claim to be in the true succession. But no sop of comfort could obliterate the dreadful tragedy of divided families, lost prestige, opposing meetings, weakened spiritual forces, and the bitter memories of the separation.

Each party exerted itself to its utmost to make a strong case before the religious world, and to justify its course. The "Hicksites" for the most part were satisfied to rest their case on their devotion to the cause of freedom of belief, liberality of spirit, and humanitarian service. In New York, however, where they were eager to win their judicial case, they went much further, and allied themselves in a positive statement of faith with the historical position of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Friends. The soundness and regularity of their "statement" would hardly have been questioned had not the tension of the times made everybody excessively critical. It was as follows:

> The said Society of Friends, as appears from historical records, and the writings of early Friends, have always believed in the existence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are one. That there is one holy, just, merciful, almighty and eternal God, who is the Father of all things; that appeared to the holy patriarchs and prophets of old, at sundry times and in divers manners; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the everlasting Wisdom, divine Power, true Light, only Saviour and Preserver of all, the same one, holy, just, merciful, almighty and eternal God, who, in the fulness of time took, and was manifest in the flesh; at which time he preached (and his disciples after him) the everlasting gospel of repentance and promise of remission of sins and eternal life to all that heard and obeyed; who said, he that is with you (in the flesh) shall be in you (by the Spirit), and though he left them (as to the flesh), yet not comfortless, for he

would come to them again (in the Spirit), for the Lord Jesus Christ is that Spirit, a manifestation whereof is given to every one to profit withal. In which Holy Spirit they believe, as the same almighty and eternal God.

In relation to the outward manifestation of Jesus Christ, they have always believed in the scripture testimony of his miraculous conception, birth, life, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension; and they further believe that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

They also believe in the inspiration and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; and that they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished with all good works.[1]

The "Orthodox" Friends reacted strongly, by contra-suggestion, from everything that bore the marks of unsoundness. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1828 prepared *A Declaration* which traced the history of "the spirit of unbelief and insubordination," painted the doctrines of the so-called "separatists" in the darkest colours, and formulated its own position in unmistakably "orthodox" terms. A committee composed of representatives of all the "Orthodox" Yearly Meetings in America met in Philadelphia in September 1829, and drew up *A Testimony* which was adopted in succession by all the Yearly Meetings of that branch. A few extracts from this document will indicate how strongly this "Testimony" leaned toward the evangelical position of the Protestant churches.

The fallen condition of man, as he stands in a state of nature, is a doctrine held forth in the Holy Scriptures; and it is of great importance in its application to ourselves, as well as in its intimate connection with the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ. Man was originally created in the divine image. "In the image of God created he him," "crowned him with glory and honour" and set him over the works of his hands. But by transgression he fell from this exalted condition; incurred the penalty of death; and so lost the divine image—the wisdom, purity and

[1] Janney's *History of the Friends*, vol. iv. pp. 339, 340.

power in which he was made. This lapse of our prime ancestors not only immediately affected the actual transgressors, but remotely all their posterity. The society of Friends, in declaring their belief of the extension of the effects of Adam's fall to all his posterity, have been careful to distinguish between those effects as they apply to us, simply in a state of nature, or as the posterity of Adam in his fallen state; and the guilt or sin which attaches to us in consequence of our own actual transgressions.[1]

The Holy Scriptures record the fall of man, as having taken place through the temptation of a separate being. The whole course of Scripture testimony, both under the Law and the Gospel, represents the devil or Satan as a distinct being, and properly forming no part of man. The circumstance of his existence as a tempter, and of his uttering falsehood, which is sin; and of his denying the veracity of God, which is blasphemy, before our first parents had committed their offence, or yielded to the temptation, prove undeniably his separate existence; and that there was such a being, in the exercise of his malevolent character, while our prime ancestors were yet in the divine image.[2]

In taking a view of the original and present condition of man —at first in the divine image, and afterwards, fallen, degenerate and dead, we are to consider him composed, in part, of an immortal soul, which must eternally exist, in a state either of happiness or misery. Thus the doctrine of the resurrection, both of the just and the unjust—of future judgment—of rewards and punishments; and the realities of heaven and hell, is inseparably connected with the belief of the attributes of God, and the immortality of the soul. And hence the consequences of sin, and of alienation from God, not being confined to the present state of existence, but of eternal duration, the redemption of man becomes one of the most awful, humbling, and exalted subjects which can possibly engage the attention of the human mind.[3]

Many pages are devoted to "that deeply interesting subject"—"belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His divine offices in our redemption."[4] He is, they say, the "propitiation," sufficient for the effects of the *fall*, and also sufficient to cover the actual transgressions of men.[5] A long display of great texts and carefully selected passages from Friends' writings culminates in the following declaration:

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[1] *Testimony of the Society of Friends on the Continent of America* (Phila., 1830), p. 7. [2] *Ibid.* p. 8. [3] *Ibid.* p. 9.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 9. [5] *Ibid.* p. 17.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, thus held forth as being for us, and the means of reconciliation with God, is represented in the Scriptures as a sacrifice; and as that one sacrifice which was represented by the sacrifices under the legal dispensation.[1]

The ancient doctrine of the primacy of the Light of Christ in the soul gave the committee much difficulty. They still claimed that it was a "fundamental doctrine," but they felt compelled to indicate that those who were "unsound" had departed from the Light, and had followed "the operations of their own mind," or more likely they had been beguiled by "the inner darkness" which Satan substitutes for "Light." They concluded that the real test of the Light lies in the willingness of the believer to accept the Scriptures, and to hold fast to sound doctrine, without which what is called "guidance" is in fact "delusion."[2]

The main tragedy of the separation is to be found, I think, in the fact that neither party succeeded in getting down through the cooled crust of inherited Quakerism to any fresh springs of water. Both sides in the controversy remained throughout the struggle in the dry area of tradition and theology. Sometimes the tragedy of separated churches and divided families is relieved by the discovery which one side or the other makes of a new line of march for the race, or by the incursion of fresh light upon the central issues of the soul. Nothing of this sort occurred to relieve the tragedy of 1827–1828.

We look in vain here for any new illumination or for any fresh experience, or for any transforming idea. The "Hicksite" members challenged the ancient authorities and demanded larger freedom for the individual, and in doing that they were no doubt the champions of a liberating movement, which was beyond question needed throughout the entire Society. But the moment one turns to their constructive ideas as to their positive programme the thinness of the contribution is only too

[1] *Testimony of the Society of Friends on the Continent of America* (Phila., 1830), p. 14.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 20, 21.

apparent. No great spiritual movement ever flourishes on the mere liberty to believe whatever one wishes. The Kingdom of God is not achieved by proclamations *against* creeds and declarations of faith. What really matters for the progress of the Kingdom after all is the possession of some guiding vision, the grasp of some truth in comparison with which everything else on earth sinks into minor importance. No religious fellowship has a place of prophetic leadership in the life of humanity until it is mastered by some positive principle that comes as an evangel to the ears of weary and heavy-laden men. The negative note is always a handicap in spiritual undertakings.

There was, it is true, one great central positive idea underlying all that Elias Hicks said or wrote, and forming the corner-stone of all that was emphatic in the beliefs of the "Hicksite" party. That was the doctrine of the Light within. The trouble, however, was that nobody succeeded in getting this idea, or doctrine, out of the arid region of antiquated theology where it was stranded. No word reveals to us that anybody in that decade was able to present in terms of living experience, or in terms of sound psychological analysis, convincing reasons for resting religion wholly upon a supernatural Light—as they believed it to be—to be found in the soul of the individual. The real evidence appears to lie for them in the fact that the Society had always taught this, and that it could be supported by numberless passages from reputed Quaker writers!

What we really get when we endeavour to gather in their body of ideas is a partial and one-sided selection of ancient doctrines from the Quaker fathers emphasizing a single aspect of religious truth—the inward basis. But we get this—even granting it were soundly grounded in verifiable reality—out of perspective, dissevered from the external and historical factor, with too much emphasis on the primacy of the individual, with too great stress on negations, and with a lack of first-hand spiritual experience and of tried and tested guiding truths, drawn out of

the corporate experience of the Christian believers of all ages.[1]

But the difficulty is not solved or relieved when we cross over to the other side of the chasm. We do not even have here the forward look of men who are bent on inaugurating freedom from a yoke of bondage. The largest claim the "Orthodox" leaders made was that they were "guarding the heritage" as it was. They were the defenders of the *status quo*, the position achieved by the past. They, too, had their body of sacred ideas which prove on examination to be as one-sided and partial a selection out of the Quaker fathers and official documents as were the views of their opponents. Here, again, the bubbling of the living water of experience was not much in evidence. The theological phrases, picked up from the old battle-fields of controversy, clanked like mediaeval armour. It is almost impossible now to read with any interest "Testimonies" and "Declarations," in which the "Orthodox" worthies formulated their faith and differentiated themselves from all who were "unsound." The words are strong, but they do not grip the mind. They leave the reader cold and unmoved. They throb with no emotion, they fuse the soul with no inevitable truth. They are repetitions out of books. They are propositions, which are not proved by a new reiteration, or by a heightened tone of voice. Nothing here gets us up to any new level or makes any issue of the soul surer.

It was no doubt a distinct merit to stand solidly, as the "Orthodox" did, by historical revelation, to insist upon the divine character of Christ, to make much of the redemption of man from sin through the amazing grace of God, but it was pitiful to hold it in such a traditional

[1] Elias Hicks' peculiar views on the nature of Christ, and his theories of Scripture, were merely personal and capricious opinions. They were not the result of sound exegesis, nor did they derive from processes of coercive logic. They were not the outcome of unusual spiritual experience or of close correspondence with divine realities. They were inferences made from very inadequate data in a period before critical scholarship had become a common possession, and they have no present-day value. They are of interest only for the light they bring upon the currents of thought in a by-gone age. They were not generally held by his followers, though there were probably many among his followers who sympathized in a general way with the unitarian tendency.

and second-hand way, and it was even more pitiful to be proclaiming the grace of God in printed declarations, while all actions and relations toward their former brothers and sisters in the faith showed an unyielding hardness of spirit, and a sad lack of that love that suffers long and is kind. Let all this remind us of a kind of warfare that is happily of a dead past. In the days when men were confident of their infallibility it was not easy to be gentle, and in the days of narrow intensity it would be too much to expect that both parties should see all that they lacked themselves, and should appreciate all the good embodied in their opponents.[1]

[1] There is a good reliable account of this and the other American separations in Edward Grubb's *Separations* (London, 1914) and in Allen C. Thomas' *A History of Friends in America* (5th edition, 1919).

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SECOND TRAGEDY OF SEPARATION (1835–1855)

THE twenty years from 1835 to 1855 were the darkest and saddest in the history of Quakerism.

They were, as we have seen from former chapters, not altogether dark. Missionary strivings were pushing toward birth. Philanthropic movements were engaging the attention of some of the most devoted Friends. Bible study was preparing the way for a new stage of life. But a steady decline was going on unchecked and unhindered. For example, in Radnor Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania no less than three hundred and sixty members were disowned between the years 1825 and 1850. One hundred and eighty-two of these were disowned between 1825 and 1830, because they had joined with the Hicksites, but the later disownments were for a variety of reasons, and plainly show a condition of decline which almost all meeting records indicate. The Society had just come through a bitter controversy over doctrine and discipline which had culminated in a split of the American meetings into two bodies or branches. Under the best of conditions the power and influence of Friends were bound to decrease. They could not again speak to the world or to the churches with the same compelling message. They could not talk with the same assurance as before of the authority of the Light, and they could not appeal with the same conviction to the conquering force of love. Each branch claimed to be "the child of promise" and to be the purveyor of light, but the persistent hostility to one another ate the

heart out of the fine old name "Friend" and weakened the quality of spiritual leadership. The only hope of return to spiritual power lay in the discovery of a way back into unity and love. It was the most urgent task of Quaker statesmen to feel their way down to central realities and to come together around the unshaken pillars of truth, to which all who used the name of "Friend" still bore testimony. Instead of pursuing this course of wisdom and of healing, the generation following the great division continued the bad habit of controversy and pushed division almost to the limit of absurdity. The "Hicksite" Friends had contended for liberty of thought, and they naturally allowed their members to hold whatever views they wished to hold. They henceforth found slight occasion for schisms and divisions, but the "Orthodox" Friends had in a measure reverted to the position of the early protestant sects that doctrine must be scripturally sound and historically valid, and they therefore found themselves compelled to go on sifting and winnowing, until they found the "true seed" and the "sound remnant," even though it might be very small indeed.

I have shown in a former chapter, adequately, I trust, that there had been for half-a-century a gradual but steady change of base in the Society. A large number of the leaders had become convinced that sound doctrine was essential to salvation, and they had been working with zeal and earnestness to purify the Society from the dross of unbelief and to have a membership purged of all unsoundness in faith. The controversies of the "Hicksite-Orthodox" separation greatly accentuated this attitude in the "Orthodox" wing. The one satisfaction the leaders of this latter branch found, as they reviewed the havoc, was that unsoundness had been winnowed away and that the remnant that was left was "pure" in the faith.

This "Orthodox" attitude was distinctly stronger and more in evidence in Great Britain than in America. It has been seriously questioned whether there would have been a separation in 1827–1828 if it had not been for

the aggressive influence of visitors from England. The next movement so freighted with trouble, in any case, had its inception in England. London Yearly Meeting contained many influential persons who were strongly in sympathy with the "Orthodox" party in the controversy of 1827–1828. There were members of that Yearly Meeting who were determined now to have the Society shake itself free of all Quaker phrases which left its orthodoxy in doubt and to move out into vigorous evangelicalism. This attitude found its most extreme and impressive expression in a little thin volume published in 1835. This book was written by Isaac Crewdson of Manchester, England, and bore the title, *A Beacon to the Society of Friends.* It was a clear, lucid and forceful statement of the pronounced evangelical position. The writer seized upon the extreme passages in the sermons and writings of Elias Hicks, and used them effectively to show the dangers involved in the doctrine of the inward Light as the fundamental basis of religion. For him "the inward Light," as interpreted by Barclay, was the weak spot in Quakerism and its central "error." He did not mince matters in the least. He said what he thought without fear or hesitation:

> The great deception [by which he means what he calls "the heresy of Hicksism and Deism"] appears to have originated in the assumption that we are authorized to expect to be taught the true knowledge of God and his salvation,—our duty to him and to our fellow-men, *immediately* by the Spirit, independently of his *revelation* through the Scriptures,—an assumption which is unsupported by Scripture, contradicted by fact, and one which renders its votaries a prey to many fatal delusions.[1]

Crewdson was himself unmystical to a degree, and he was a settled foe to mysticism in all its aspects. There is for him one fixed basis of religious truth—the

[1] *A Beacon*, p. 6. Crewdson had earlier in life been a firm believer in the inward Light as expounded in Barclay's *Apology*; but probably through the influence of a powerful Calvinistic preacher, whom he occasionally heard in Manchester, he had swung entirely away from his youthful faith and had adopted the "evangelical" interpretation of Christianity (see article in *British Friend* for Eleventh month, 1870, p. 282).

revealed word of God as recorded in Scripture. This is primary and paramount, and by this all experience is to be tried and tested. Over against the statements which Elias Hicks made, Crewdson sets the testimony of Scripture. He quotes a passage which claims to represent the mind of the Spirit as revealed by the Light within, and then asks: "What saith the Scripture?" Thus he demolishes, or thinks he demolishes, the very basis of Elias Hicks' teaching. But all the time it is not Hicks whom he is really attacking. He is aiming his bolts at the foundation principle which the "Orthodox" held in common with Hicks, the mystical basis of inward revelation. The inward Light he boldly declares to be "a delusive notion."[1] He utterly repudiates Quietism, and asserts that it is a great "error" to imagine that silence and stillness are essential to true worship.[2] He sweeps away as so much chaff the whole theory that man must be "prepared" to pray or worship by an inward operation of the Spirit, for the sense of human need is spur enough for prayer.[3] He disallows the old-time Quaker phrases—which had become as indispensable as breathing—he will not sanction even "creaturely activity."

"Creaturely exertions, creaturely activity," he says, "are not Scripture phrases; and the mischief is very great, that has been produced by using unscriptural terms in speaking and writing on religious subjects when the meaning of those terms is not clear and definite. Such phrases also as sinking down—centering down—digging deep—dwelling deep—turning inward, etc., the reader may have observed, but we need hardly say, they are not the language of Christ and His Apostles.

"Upon what occasion did the Lord Jesus tell his disciples that they must be 'still'? . . . We recollect no one instance in which he recommended the mystical quiet.[4]

"Did the Apostle tell the Corinthians they must come to a revelation in their own hearts? Did he direct them to a light within themselves? Did he tell them to 'gather into stillness'—'to wait for the heavenly Pilot'? Nothing like it."[5]

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[1] *A Beacon*, p. 77. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 96 and 99.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 101. [4] *Ibid.* pp. 112. 113. [5] *Ibid.* pp. 110, 111.

In short, Crewdson goes the whole way and repudiates root and branch the inherited Quaker faith as spurious. He calls it a religion of mysticism essentially unlike the religion of Christ which is "founded on the testimony of the Spirit of God transmitted to us in holy Scripture." This latter religion, he concludes, is

> . . . "the only religion by which we can be saved; and, therefore, however specious anything which is substituted (Quakerism, for example) may be, if we reject the Gospel, we cut ourselves off from salvation; because God has plainly declared to us who have the Scriptures, that there is no other way of salvation for us, than that which he hath made known to us in the holy Scriptures" —"the unscriptural notion of the light within" is "another gospel."[1]

Crewdson was by no means alone in his position. Luke Howard, the scholarly editor of *The Yorkshireman*, friend of William Allen and co-labourer with him, and one of the ablest members of London Yearly Meeting, heartily supported him. William Boulton of Manchester, an Elder and brother-in-law to Isaac Crewdson, had for two or three years been teaching a Bible Class for younger members and was strongly in sympathy with the *Beacon* position. Isaac and Anna Braithwaite of Kendal, John and Esther Wilkinson of High Wycombe, and many other prominent members set themselves against the mysticism of the Society and were determined to establish a sound system of faith in place of dependence on inward Light. But the most important person who leaned strongly in this direction was Joseph John Gurney of Norwich, though he did not go the whole way with the extremist Crewdson. Before concluding the account of the "Beacon-movement," we must turn to a brief review of the development of this famous Quaker leader of the nineteenth century—Joseph John Gurney.

He was next to the youngest of the eleven children of John and Catherine Gurney, and was born in 1788. His mother was Catherine Bell, a great-granddaughter of Robert Barclay "the Apologist." His father was a man

[1] *A Beacon*, pp. 153, 154.

of large wealth, a partner in the Norwich Bank, owner of Earlham Hall and the head of a very remarkable and distinguished family group. Earlham Hall was famous for its culture and hospitality, and during the formative years of the large family of sons and daughters there prevailed at Earlham Hall a strong "worldly" atmosphere, an intense interest in the popular pursuits and studies of the time, with almost no indication that this Hall was to be a nursery of a new "school of prophets." The wave of deism and infidelity was peculiarly strong in Norwich, and Earlham Hall did not escape its influence. The oldest daughter, Catherine, who, on the death of her mother in 1792, became the feminine guide and stay of the large Earlham family — writing of their life in 1798—says: "We elder sisters were in no small degree carried off our centre."

"We had," she adds, "a religion of sentiment, but no knowledge of Scriptural truth. We never thought about that, but took a romantic pleasure in the beauties of nature, and in sentimental enjoyments, intercourse with each other, singing and some few books. Rousseau, amongst the few, soon came into fashion as the most interesting of any, and I need not say how undermining this was to truth, both in theory and practice. The foundations of truth and duty, such as had existed for us before, were shaken, and we were led astray in conduct. My father in the meantime was very unhappy and at a loss how to treat the case."[1]

Little Richenda Gurney, when she was thirteen years old, records in her Diary the prevailing unsettlement:

Kitty read the New Testament to us, which I was usually interested in, but at this time I do not believe in Christ.

Louisa's Diary gives a striking glimpse of the gay Quaker life at Earlham:

Yesterday we had a most delightful dance. . . . I was in ecstasies after supper with dancing Malbrook. Two things raise my soul to feel devotion—nature and music. As I went down the dance yesterday, I gave up my soul to the enchanting

[1] *The Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. pp. 78 and 81.

Malbrook. I thought of heaven and of God. I really tasted heaven for a minute.[1]

Two great influences brought the Earlham group back to a solid religious basis—the influence of Quaker itinerant Ministers and the influence of strongly evangelical churchmen who became intimate with the family. One result was the gradual division of the family in religious affiliation, one section turning with unreserved dedication to the Quaker ideals of life and another uniting with equal devotion with the historic Church. We have already seen how under the ministry and personal influence of William Savery, Elizabeth Gurney, afterwards Elizabeth Fry, was changed by an inward transformation and turned to a great career of service. Priscilla, Rachel, and Joseph John were also reached by the Quaker influence and became prominent Ministers.[2] The mother, dying when Joseph John was still very young, had called him her "morning star," and had seemed to forecast the supreme bent of his nature. After eight years in boarding-school, Joseph John was sent to Oxford in 1803 at the age of fifteen.[3] Here he studied under the tutorship of John Rogers, a member of the Church of England and a sound and accurate scholar. Gurney worked at his studies with great zeal and fidelity and made himself an excellent classical scholar, growing all the time of his Oxford period, more deeply religious and more strongly evangelical. In 1805 he returned to Norwich and took a position in his father's bank, though he continued his studies with unabated interest and steadily widened out the field of his investigations, including oriental languages, hellenistic and medieval literature and the writings of the Church Fathers as well as the Old and New Testaments in their original languages.

During this early business period he was deeply influenced by his friend, the Rev. Edward Edwards of Lynn, who had a great place in the growing religious life of the

[1] *The Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 79.

[2] Rachel Gurney later in life, in 1820, was baptized and joined the Church of England. Samuel Gurney, who was a Friend, will be dealt with in a later chapter.

[3] He was, of course, not a student in the university, since Friends were still excluded from Oxford and Cambridge.

Earlham family. He attributes Joseph John's immense scholarly achievements to the practice of his favourite maxim, "Be a whole man to one thing at a time." Edward Edwards was at this time very frequently at Earlham, and it was largely due to him that two of the sisters, Catherine and Richenda, joined the Church. Rachel writes in her Diary, June 1808:

> Mr. Edwards has been spending a week with us, and it is certain that his influence, his company and conversation have had the effect of truly comforting and encouraging us in the best way. He has been the means of drawing forth all our hearts into some degree of religious communion. I could not have hoped before that people brought up with such different associations could have met so nearly both in judgment and feeling as we do. It may well be called the fellowship of the holy Spirit, which we believe will be perfected in heaven.[1]

Through Edward Edwards Joseph John Gurney came into intimate fellowship with two great evangelical churchmen who were to leave the mark of their spiritual influence forever upon him — Henry Venn of Lynn and Charles Simeon of Cambridge. Charles Simeon (1759–1836) had an attractive and contagious power of personality over young men, almost equal to that of Newman at Oxford, and he drew the young Quaker scholar into the inner circle of his friendship. He frequently visited Earlham, and he impressed the intense convictions of his soul indelibly upon his young friend.[2] He was one of the most effective evangelical preachers of his age, and his whole soul was in his message of the gospel. Two realities constituted his world, the fact of sin and the glory of redemption through Christ. The great evangelical churchman and anti-slavery leader, William Wilberforce, was also among Gurney's most intimate friends, and one of the most powerful influences upon his inner life. Writing

[1] *The Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. i. p. 191.

[2] Joseph John Gurney has left an excellent account of Simeon in his little book, *Reminiscences of Chalmers, Simeon, Wilberforce, etc.* There is a good study of Simeon in *Littell's Living Age* for 1847, vol. xiv. p. 487, reprinted from *The North British Review*. The standard Life is H. C. G. Moule's *Charles Simeon* (London, 1892).

to his children just before the death of Wilberforce in 1833, he says:

> I have now enjoyed a near friendship with William Wilberforce for nearly seventeen years, and I shall always consider my acquaintance with him as one of the happiest circumstances of my life.[1]

They held kindred views about the basis of revelation, the authority of Scripture, the way of salvation, and they worked closely together in the British and Foreign Bible Society and in anti-slavery efforts.

In spite of the growing influence of the Church in the Earlham group, Joseph John Gurney finally very positively settled his permanent connection with the Society of Friends. His father died in 1809, and he suddenly found himself at the head of an important bank and the proprietor of a great estate. He was a man of strikingly handsome face and attractive personality. He possessed very unusual mental powers and rare intellectual attainments. He had been trained largely outside the Society of Friends, and his closest personal friends were Ministers of the Church of England. His sisters were drifting toward the Church, and all his scholarly interests naturally carried him in that direction. But he had a fundamental sympathy with the Quaker manner of worship, and his studies had convinced him early in life that the Quaker position in most particulars was scripturally correct. By an emphatic and characteristic act he brought matters to a crisis and settled for ever his religious attitude. His own account in his *Journal* of this "crisis" is too clear and valuable to omit.

> I am not sure of the precise time, but I think it was very soon after my father's decease, and after a visit from my dearest sister Fry to our family and meeting, that, as I lay in bed one night, light from above seemed to beam upon me and point out in a very explicit manner the duty of submitting to decided Quakerism, more particularly to the humbling sacrifice of "plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel." The visitation was strong, but my will was stronger; I would not, I did not comply; putting off

[1] *The Gurneys of Earlham*, vol. ii. p. 69.

what appeared to me most unbearable to a more "convenient season." I was then rather more than twenty-one years old, and the morning sacrifice was not bound to the horns of the Lord's altar with the integrity, boldness and simplicity which the case required. Many persons might say that, taking into view the danger of imagination in such measures, I did well in resisting this call. After a space of nearly thirty years, full of a variety of experience, I am not of this judgment; for I believe that nothing is more profitable than the ready obedience of faith, and nothing more dangerous than the contrary. In my own case the effect of irresolution was a painful state of spiritual weakness; and when at last I made the sacrifice, it was but lamely done, and under circumstances of still greater humiliation to the pride and vanity of my own heart than it would have been at first. In the meantime I enjoyed some very precious religious privileges, two of which deserve to be particularly recorded. The first was a visit to our meeting from our friend Ann Jones (then Ann Burgess). I was powerfully affected and subdued under her ministry, almost, if not quite, constrained to surrender at discretion by the love of Christ. The second was an attendance at the Yearly Meeting, to which, in despite of my youth and lapelled coat, I was appointed representative. I well remember insisting in our Quarterly Meeting, on the reading of the advice of the Yearly Meeting respecting what ought to be the character of representatives, by way of showing myself unfit, but the Friends prevailed. . . . The Yearly Meeting was to me, in this as in other years, an occasion of inexpressible solemnity—I hope of edification.

Soon after my return home I was engaged to a dinner party at the house of one of our first county gentlemen. Three weeks before the time was I engaged, and three weeks was my young mind in agitation from the apprehension, of which I could not dispossess myself, that I must enter his drawing-room with my hat on. From this sacrifice, strange and unaccountable as it may appear, I could not escape. In a Friend's attire, and with my hat on, I entered the drawing-room at the dreaded moment, shook hands with the mistress of the house, went back into the hall, deposited my hat, spent a rather comfortable evening, and returned home in some degree of peace. I had afterwards the same thing to do at the Bishop's; the result was, that I found myself the decided Quaker, was perfectly understood to have assumed that character, and to dinner parties, except in the family circle, was asked no more. . . .[1]

"The wearing of the hat in the house," continues Joseph John

[1] J. B. Braithwaite's *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney* (3rd edition, London, 1902), pp. 36, 38.

Gurney, "is not my practice. I have no wish to repeat what then happened; but I dare not regret a circumstance which was, under the divine blessing, made the means of fully deciding my course, and thus of facilitating my future progress. . . ."[1]

In thus entering more completely into a small society of Christians, I feel satisfied on the ground of believing that they hold the doctrine of Christ, in many respects, more in its original purity than any other sect. At the same time my judgment differs from them about some particulars; I think I may say it does about the sacraments; and I *seem* to see how much Friends would be improved by a more extensive knowledge and profession of the great offices of a Saviour's love. I also think that there is a danger in the Society of laying too great a stress upon trifles. Thus impressed, I earnestly hope I shall ever be able to stand upon a broad basis, whereon I can heartily unite with all Christians. I desire a catholic spirit, a truly humble and dependent mind, an increase of faith, hope, watchfulness and knowledge of scriptural truth.[2]

This act marked an epoch in his life and settled his religious connection; but there can be no mistaking the fact that, while loyally a Friend, he was fundamentally an "evangelical" in soul and spirit, in type of thought and in intensity of religious faith hardly distinguishable from his Episcopal friend Charles Simeon. He began speaking in public ministry at the age of twenty-nine, and his "gift" rapidly deepened and expanded. "No words," he declared, "can adequately set forth the quiet happiness" which attended his first obedience to the call of the Spirit. "Few such days have I spent on earth." "Similar feelings," he adds, "though not in so high a degree, followed the further exercise of the gift; and the Lord led me gently forward in his work, giving me to feel the sweetness of obedience to his commands, and of a surrender of soul to his service."[3]

With the early development of the ministry came an ever-expanding interest in philanthropic endeavours. He entered with unstinted zeal into all the work of his famous sister, Elizabeth Fry, for the transformation of prisons and jails and for the redemption of prisoners. He joined,

[1] J. B. Braithwaite's *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney* (3rd edition, London, 1902), p. 39.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 40.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 67.

with his brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton, and with William Wilberforce, in their great campaign for the abolition of the slave trade. He was one of the foremost members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and he gradually became, as his life unfolded, one of the most sensitive embodiments, in his time, of the spirit of Christian self-giving love.

All that was finest, purest and most lovely in the evangelical movement comes to flower in him. He was a typical expression of the humanitarian, philanthropic spirit which burst strongly forth in this revival of evangelical faith. It is, however, especially important for our present purpose to discover the central current of his religious teaching. He began early to expound his views in literary form, and he became a voluminous writer—far too profuse and voluminous. His first important religious contribution was his *Letter to a Friend on the Authority, Purpose and Effects of Christianity, especially on the Doctrine of Redemption* (published in 1824). This was soon followed by a systematic exposition of his religious faith in his *Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of the Society of Friends* (1824), which has had an enormous circulation. A further exposition of his views was published in 1825 with the title: *Essays on the Evidences, Doctrines and Practical Operation of Christianity.* His other books that deserve especial mention are: *The Lock and Key—Passages of the Old Testament which testify of Jesus Christ* (1826); *Guide to the Instruction of Young Persons in the Holy Scriptures* (1827); *Biblical Notes and Dissertations, chiefly intended to confirm and illustrate the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ* (1830); *Brief Remarks on the History, Authority and Use of the Sabbath* (1831); *Hints on the Portable Evidence of Christianity* (1832); *Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity* (1835). He sincerely believed, at least in the early period of his ministry, that he was consistent, in all his expositions of Christianity, with the central Quaker position, but nothing is more certain than that Quakerism has undergone a profound transformation at the hands of this

evangelical scholar. He wrote in 1831 to his friend William Forster:

> The perfection of religion appears to me to be *consistent Quakerism on an evangelical foundation* and I believe it will be well for us to carefully guard both the basis and the building.[1]

Quakerism emerges, when he has translated it, a complete system of evangelical theology. He puts a strong emphasis, to be sure, on the direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit, but he thinks of the work of the Holy Spirit in ways familiar to the evangelical writers rather than in the manner long peculiar to Quaker interpreters. We here pass away from an essentially mystical religion, rooted and grounded in inward experience, and find instead an elaborated plan of salvation, builded out of Scripture passages and solidly buttressed by texts. The Scriptures for him plainly take the first place in the spiritual economy and the direct word of God in the human soul a remote second place. Gurney, in his smaller sphere, is a reminder of St. Augustine. Like the greater saint, he, too, was intensely, deeply religious. Religion was the very tissue of his being; it throbbed and palpitated through every part of his life; it was genuinely a thing of real experience with him. And yet, like Augustine, when he came to tell about it for others and to expound its essential characteristics, he reduced it to a vast external system. He terminated on theology rather than on experience. Thomas Shillitoe felt this latter feature when on his dying bed he testified: "He [J. J. Gurney] has spread a linsey woolsey garment over our members."[2] The "evidences of Christianity" in his writings are the well-known evidences which the defenders of the faith in the eighteenth century marshalled against deism and infidelity—fulfilled prophecy, attested miracles, and the testimony of an infallible revelation. They are a milder, weaker replica of Paley's famous

[1] *Memoirs of Wm. Forster*, vol. ii. p. 80. Italics are mine.

[2] Hodgson's *The Society of Friends in the Nineteenth Century* (1875), vol. i. p. 313. This phrase "linsey woolsey garment" has a long history and had come to mean an external system of theology and a substitute for experimental life. For an early instance of its use, 1666, see Braithwaite, *Second Period*, p. 247.

arguments. With diffuse style, constant reiteration and the outlook of a man who has no doubts and who knows nothing of modern criticism, Gurney travels again and again over the whole field of apologetics, without ever discovering anything which will not yield to his onward conquering march. "Christianity," he discovered early in his career, "is a religion revealed to mankind by the Creator himself, and promulgated on His authority,"[1] and his great business in life was to spell out and expound this authoritative system of religion, revealed once for all in Scripture. The writings of the Old and New Testament "combine in developing one system of truth," one redemptive "scheme of a wise and merciful Contriver."[2] Nobody has ever been more certain than Gurney that the entire counsel of God for all ages is recorded in Scripture and that every word of this Book is a word of God. "It applies to all circumstances, comprehends all conditions, regulates all motives, directs and controls all overt acts."[3] He will not consent to the Quaker use of the text in 2 Peter i. 19-21, "a more sure word of prophecy," "a day star rising in your own hearts," as a reference to the inward Light—it is for him a reference to the prophecies of written Scripture which have been preserved for our illumination. Without the outward no one can have the inward.[4]

Gurney spent a large part of his own life studying the Book which he calls "a record," "the only authorized record, of that divine truth which converts, sanctifies and edifies the heart of man," and he was a pioneer worker in the promotion of Bible study among lay Christians. He succeeded in introducing systematic study of the Scriptures in the schools conducted by Friends and in many non-Quaker schools as well. He aroused multitudes of people to search the Scriptures with greater care and diligence and he furnished them with lines of guidance for their

[1] "A Letter, etc.," vol. i. of *Minor Works*, ed. of 1839, p. 174.
[2] "Portable Evidence," *ibid.* vol. i. pp. 234 and 301.
[3] "Portable Evidence," *ibid.* vol. i. p. 261.
[4] This is set forth in his Tract entitled *Brief Remarks on Impartiality in the Interpretation of Scripture*, printed for private circulation only (Norwich, 1836). See *infra*.

study. For all this awakening we are grateful to him. At the same time we cannot easily forget that, with all his enthusiasm and passion for the great Book, he was tied hand and foot to eighteenth-century theories of Scripture and that he was unable to modify the narrow and static view of the evangelicals and anti-deists by a fresh re-interpretation of the genuine Quaker position.

No Quaker has ever done more than Gurney did to set the doctrine of the atonement at the centre of Christianity, around which everything else was to move. He has put a section on the atonement in almost every one of his books, and it plainly occupied the pivotal place in all his preaching and in all his writing. The entire Old Testament, he thinks, is interwoven with figures and allusions which point to the atoning and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ—"the great atonement was foreordained before the foundation of the world, and is everywhere foreshown in divinely appointed rites and sacrifices of animals"—and the New Testament is essentially for him an account of the definite atoning work of Christ, and "the blessed consequences that have followed from His merits."[1] He starts, as all the contemporary evangelical theologians started, with a ruined and depraved man—what he calls, "the fall and moral ruin of our species; our loss of the image of God, and with it eternal happiness and our subjection to the dominion of Satan."[2] And he meets this havoc with the "indemnity and cure" wrought by the imputation of righteousness "through the atoning sacrifice of Christ," by which God accepts man "as righteous for the sake of a righteous Saviour."[3] This "plan," this "scheme" thrills his soul and fires his imagination. "Christ has purchased for us," he joyously cries, "the glorious inheritance!" "In consequence of His propitiatory sacrifice and through faith in Him alone, we obtain everlasting life."[4] That was his message, told in a variety of ways and figures, but forming the heart of his

[1] See especially Essay XI. in *Essays on Christianity*.
[2] Essay XI. p. 383, of *Essays on Christianity* (2nd edition, 1826).
[3] "Portable Evidence," *Minor Works*, vol. i. p. 360.
[4] *Biblical Notes* (2nd edition, 1833), p. 352.

gospel, as it had done in the days of Augustine and Calvin and Bunyan and Wesley. It was intense and sound theology of the evangelical type, but it was a different message from that which Fox carried to the "seekers" of the Commonwealth period.

Gurney made much, as I have earlier said, of the work, or as he would say "the office," of the Holy Spirit. He supposed that he held the primitive Quaker view. In this position, however, I am convinced that he himself neither understood historically nor continued in his writings, the Quaker faith. For Gurney, as we have seen, man was a "total ruin" and, spiritually speaking, nothing could be done to help him except what was done "for him without him." Until "justification" was accomplished for him and he was restored to favour through the merits of Another than himself, he could have no assistance of any kind from above and no gift of light or of communion. He knew nothing of that truth which George Fox imparted in Derby prison to the "rough trooper" who came to ask how to get rid of the burden of his sins. "That which shows a man his sin," declared Fox, "is the same that takes it away." The Holy Spirit in Gurney's scheme was bestowed upon those who were "justified." In fact, Gurney held that the gift of the Holy Spirit was a stupendous result of the sacrificial merits of Christ's death—"it is plain and undeniable," he declared, "that the Spirit of truth and righteousness [by which he means the Holy Spirit] is bestowed upon mankind by the sole mediation of Jesus Christ."[1] This position is frequently taken in his writings, and it appears to be a settled view of his.

God becomes, by implication at least, a different nature after the mediation of Christ than before. He bestows Himself now upon those who accept the merits of Christ as their justification. And through the added work of the Holy Spirit in the justified person a new stage of salvation becomes possible—the stage of "sanctification." Both these experiences, he says, "originate in the

[1] *Essays on Christianity*, p. 459.

boundless mercy of God and both arise immediately out of the sacrifice of Christ," but sanctification is a second work of grace and a definite second stage in the plan of salvation.[1] He was in this matter much closer to Wesley than he was to Fox and he gave ground for the later extreme view of "sanctification," which swept over American Quakerism in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Joseph John Gurney was, without question, one of the most beautiful Christian personalities of his time. He was a person *bien né*, possessed of almost everything we eager human beings desire. He was rich, handsome, beloved, endowed with great gifts, continually successful, immensely popular. He added to his native qualities the fruits of wide, if not deep, learning, and he dedicated all to his Lord and to his fellowmen. His writings were much more widely read both inside and outside the Society than had been the case with any other Quaker writer who had, up to his time, ever lived, and he was one of the most persuasive preachers in the entire history of the Society; but, without knowing or intending it, he was throughout his life subtly transforming the Society into which he was born, and by his works and his public ministry his generation and those which succeeded were made familiar with an evangelicized Quakerism which was fundamentally unlike that which "the first publishers of Truth" planted in England and America.

There is some evidence that Gurney was at least dimly conscious of his lack of parallelism with the Quaker "fathers." Edward Ash in giving his reminiscences, in *The Friend* (London) of Ninth Month, 1870, of the work which the Yearly Meeting's committee did in connection with the *Beacon*, admitted that he himself at that time had arrived at the conclusion that Robert Barclay's doctrine of the inward Light was not, as a whole, warranted by the teaching of Scripture, and he adds that this view about the inward Light was "originally suggested" to him by J. J. Gurney. In 1836, furthermore, Gurney wrote a pamphlet

[1] *Essays on Christianity*, p. 459, and in many other places of Gurney's writings.

entitled *Brief Remarks on Impartiality in the Interpretation of Scripture*,[1] in which he set forth his own interpretation of a number of New Testament texts which had been key-passages for the early Friends, such passages for instance as the "Day Star in the heart" (2 Pet. i. 19-21); "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 14-17); the universal Light passage in John i. 9; the meaning of the "Seed which reigns" (1 Pet. i. 2, 3); and the passage about eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood (John vi. 31-56). The variation of the teaching in this pamphlet from the position of the early Friends is clear and obvious. Gurney positively rejects interpretations which favour a mystical meaning[2] in these passages, and gives them all a pronounced evangelical significance.

The body of Gurney's writings had already been published when Isaac Crewdson's *Beacon* appeared in 1835. There was a striking similarity in the central theological positions held by the writers Gurney and Crewdson. Both limited revelation to Scripture—"the only authorized record of truth." Both builded their entire Christian faith on and around the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ—"our immense debt," as Crewdson says, "is cancelled by the precious blood of Christ, if, by faith, we lay hold on Him as our surety." Crewdson, however, did not appreciate, as Gurney did, the mode of worship in Friends' meetings, the ministry of silence and "the perceptible guidance of the Spirit." The former spoke out his views regardless of consequences and showed little restraint, while Gurney was always refined, gentle and restrained in utterance, a model controversialist, and, furthermore, he was determined not to separate, but to carry his Society with him.

The first answer to the *Beacon* was a short "letter to Isaac Crewdson" (1835), written by Thomas Thompson of Liverpool. A more elaborate and adequate answer was *A Defence of the Doctrines of Immediate Revelation*

[1] The London Morning Meeting refused to sanction the publication of this pamphlet, but it was printed for private circulation, and in 1840 was reprinted in America, so that it was very widely read.

[2] See *op. cit.* p. 9.

*and Universal and Saving Light* (1835), by Thomas Hancock, M.D.,[1] of Liverpool, which was followed the same year by a trenchant book from the pen of Henry Martin of Manchester entitled *Truth Vindicated.* J. J. Gurney in the following year answered this book of Martin's in *Strictures on "Truth Vindicated,"* which very plainly shows how close he himself was in spirit and letter to the position of the *Beacon.* Gurney notes in his *Journal* that the London Morning Meeting gave "explicit verdict that no sentiment was advanced in his *Strictures* at variance with the principles of the Society of Friends,"[2] which further indicates how widespread the new Quakerism already was. Gurney adds, with satisfaction, that twenty thousand copies of his pamphlet rapidly sold. The controversy widened out and produced an extensive literature which is now as dull and dead as the poets buried in the *Dunciad.* Crewdson had a respectable following, among whom was one of the most famous of the American Ministers and Quaker leaders of the time, Elisha Bates of Ohio, then on a religious visit in England.[3]

The issue had to be met. Lancashire Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee of twenty-one Friends to "restore unity in the Monthly Meeting." But before this committee had had an opportunity to accomplish its purpose, the Yearly Meeting of 1835 took up the issue, and after much discussion appointed a committee of thirteen to visit Manchester and to help "unite" Friends in Lancashire Quarterly Meeting. Joseph John Gurney was a member of this committee, whose labours were bound to be heavy and perplexing, as they certainly proved to be. From the very beginning the affair was more or less mismanaged. The committee itself contained a number of persons, including Gurney, who were in essential sympathy with the theological doctrines that were dear to Crewdson. At the opening sitting of the committee, Gurney laid before its members a voluminous

[1] Dr. Hancock was at this time an Elder in Liverpool Meeting. He had earlier lived in London, and before that in Ireland.

[2] *Memoirs* (1854), vol. ii. p. 65.

[3] Elisha Bates afterwards left Friends.

body of evidence which he had collected, designed to show that the Society needed at that time to be warned against doctrinal error, and he appears to have maintained throughout that the author of the *Beacon* was "sound in doctrine."[1] He had stated in Yearly Meeting of 1835 that the only hope of salvation rested on the atonement and on the imputed merits of Jesus Christ. He expressed a feeling of regret that the *Beacon* had been published, but he did not indicate that it was at any point unscriptural.[2] The committee under these circumstances naturally could not unconditionally condemn his book; in fact, Crewdson had received a personal letter from Gurney in which the latter had spoken sympathetically of certain features of the *Beacon* as "in accordance with the sentiments of every sound and enlightened Christian." He had commended especially Crewdson's treatment of the atonement and justification as "excellent," while the committee as a whole yielded so many points to Crewdson and grasped the central features of Quakerism themselves so feebly that they had no fundamental case against him or his book.[3] They recommended to Crewdson's Monthly Meeting not to proceed against him for "doctrinal unsoundness," but they recommended nevertheless that he should refrain from speaking in public ministry and should be deprived of the privilege of sitting in meetings of Ministers and Elders. He was not "unsound," but he must henceforth keep silent! He refused to submit to this decision and eventually, after various trying episodes, he resigned his membership, carrying out of the Manchester Meeting with him many of his friends who agreed in general with his views and who felt aggrieved at his "treatment."[4] The little band formed a separate body which they styled "Evangelical Friends," and which was increased to about three hundred members by additions

[1] See article by Edward Ash in *The Friend* (London), vol. x. p. 207.

[2] The correspondence between the committee and Crewdson is printed in a pamphlet entitled, *The Whole Correspondence between the Committee of the Y.M. and Isaac Crewdson*, and in a second pamphlet, *A Few Particulars of the Correspondence*.

[3] Gurney's letter is printed in *The Whole Correspondence*, p. 65.

[4] The official name of the Monthly Meeting was "Hardshaw West,"

from Kendal and Bristol and other parts of England. Many of the members eventually joined in fellowship with the "Plymouth Brethren," with whose tenets they were in substantial sympathy, and others merged with evangelical groups in the Church of England.

London Yearly Meeting of 1836 was a critical time. It was, however, passed without any indication of further division. When it was over the question as to which of the two prevailing types of thought was to dominate the Society in England was settled for that period. Both types—the evangelical type and the historic-conservative Quaker type—had leaders of strong conviction, and each had a large following, but Joseph John Gurney towered in influence head and shoulders above all others, and in the end he quietly, persuasively led the body to the conclusion which he desired to see taken.

An Epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was read at this time, which appealed to London Friends to enforce the Discipline against persons who were disloyal to the fundamental principles of the Society. It deplored the publication of the *Beacon* and recommended the dissemination of the writings of early Friends as an antidote to "unsoundness."

Sarah (Lynes) Grubb, then venerable with years, had a "concern" to visit the Men's Meeting—a solemn gathering of a thousand men—and give them the message of the Lord for the hour. She did it with directness and with an air of oracular finality:

> I am come among you, a poor weak creature, laden with a burden, the weight of which cannot be expressed, even by the tongue of the eloquent, much less by mine; but I must endeavour to lay it down.
>
> The time is now come, often foretold, when the Lord would descend amongst this people, as the rain, the storm and the overflowing flood. It must indeed be acknowledged that a mighty shaking has come upon us. . . . The foundation of every individual in this Society will be discovered, whether it be upon the rock or upon the sand. . . . You study the Scriptures by the strength of your rational and intellectual faculties and I doubt not you comprehend their meaning; and here you stop: you

refuse to come to Christ in His inward and spiritual appearance; you will not hear His voice speaking in your hearts, and are therefore rejecting Him. . . . Oh, my friends, there were some in ancient days who said to one another, "Go to, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly; let us build a city and a tower whose top may reach heaven." Some of you are laying hand to hand, and shoulder to shoulder, to erect a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; beautiful indeed to the eye, and of fair proportions; and you are saying to others, "Come behold what we are doing; join yourselves unto us, and we will show you the gospel path unto heaven, a path full of charity and love; an easy and comfortable path, wherein ye may avoid the cross." I am commanded to say to you that as in the instance of the tower of Babel, the Lord came down and confounded their language, so it will be with the Babel-builders amongst us.[1]

Ann Jones of Stockport—wife of George Jones—who had taken important part in America on the "orthodox" side against the teaching of Elias Hicks, also visited the Men's Meeting with a similar uncompromising message in favour of the old-time religion. She said in part:

There are some among you who are encouraging a carnal wisdom, a head knowledge, an outward learning, which exalteth itself and is ever endeavouring, in its own strength, to find out the way of salvation by the study of Scripture. This spirit has spread even among those who are making a very high profession —men who are robbing Christ. They talk much of a belief in the atoning sacrifice, but are setting at nought and despising Christ in his inward and spiritual appearance.[2]

Ann Jones in her address made a vigorous thrust at Joseph John Gurney in these words:

The Lord hath a controversy with the spirit which hath crept into this Society and which is sitting in the judgment seat. The Lord, I say, hath a controversy with these; He hath, if possible, a still greater controversy with those who are seeking to please both parties —to pursue a middle course.

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[1] Hodgson, *The Society of Friends in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. i. pp. 293-295. There is an important comment in Josiah Forster's MS. Notes of this meeting in which he says that he conferred with several leading Friends about Sarah Grubb's "prophetic style in meeting on 4th day and often of late." He adds: "I thought it a possible thing that she might be in danger, more particularly in reference to the strong language and assumption of Divine authority." These Notes are in the possession of Wm. Charles Braithwaite.

[2] Hodgson, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 298.

These voices, with all their claim to divine sanction, failed to control the body. Soon after Ann Jones withdrew, a proposition was read from Westmorland Quarterly Meeting, formulated and advocated by Isaac Braithwaite of Kendal, as follows:

A difference of opinion having arisen in the Society as to the authority of holy Scripture in matters of faith and doctrine, this meeting requests the Yearly Meeting to take the subject into its serious consideration, and clearly to define what are, in its estimation, the authority, place and office of the holy Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice.

A warm discussion followed in which Gurney took a leading part. The ultimate result was the adoption, as a part of the general Epistle for the year, of a declaration of faith regarding the place and authority of the Bible. The central core of the declaration is contained in the following emphatic passage:

It has ever been, and still is, the belief of the Society of Friends, that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God: that therefore the declarations contained in them rest on the authority of God Himself and there can be no appeal from them to any other authority whatsoever: that they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus; being the appointed means of making known to us the blessed truths of Christianity: that they are the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound as Christians to believe, and of the moral principles which are to regulate our actions: that no doctrine which is not contained in them can be required of any one to be believed as an article of faith: that whatsoever any man says or does which is contrary to the Scriptures, though under profession of the immediate guidance of the Spirit, must be reckoned and accounted a mere delusion.[1]

This action was a complete triumph for the evangelical wing of the Society and opened an extensive door of future service to Joseph John Gurney. From this time forward he became the champion of evangelical Quakerism both in England and in America, and through his labours

[1] *Epistles from the Y.M. of Friends held in London*, vol. ii. p. 272; see also London *Discipline* (1906), vol. i. pp. 13, 14.

the advanced and radical position, endorsed by the Yearly Meeting in 1836, spread extensively through the Quaker world.

Meantime a stout defender of the old-time Quaker faith had already appeared in the field, who was to be for the rest of his lifetime an unswerving opponent of Gurney and a champion of the old way—the way of the inward Light. This was John Wilbur of Hopkinton, Rhode Island.

He was born in 1774, was "sober and religiously inclined from his youth," received a good common school education, taught public school for several years, was strict and conscientious in all matters of life and conversation, and steadily advanced in religious insight and spiritual gifts with his increase in age. He was appointed an Elder in his meeting at the age of twenty-eight, and he was recorded a Minister in 1812, at the age of thirty-eight. He was a man of limited outlook, intense in his convictions, convinced that the primitive Quaker position was a revival of apostolic Christianity and that George Fox was one of the most important and one of the most divinely anointed men in Christian history. He was settled in his own mind that the guidance of the Light within, as it came to him, John Wilbur, was infallible and inerrant. He was a kindly man, of deeply affectionate heart, an able preacher of the old "prophetic" type, rugged, unswerving in his moral integrity, a person who loved distinction but who would not yield an inch of his convictions for popular favour. He had almost an obsession about the "danger" involved in the teachings of Joseph John Gurney, and he made himself "lean for years" in his efforts to stem the tide which seemed to him sweeping his beloved Society away from its safe moorings.

The obsession began during John Wilbur's eventful religious visit to Great Britain and Ireland during the years 1831–1833. He had seen in spirit "this visit to the seed," since the year 1817, and the "concern" had thus ripened for fourteen years before it began to be

accomplished. His ministry was a great satisfaction to the old and solid remnant of the Society in England who stood for the ancient interpretation of Robert Barclay, and who held zealously to the truths and practices and customs which time had made sacred. Wilbur denounced the "departures" wherever he saw them—such as "the formation of Bible Societies composed of Bishops, priests and people of divers other denominations"; "joining with the hireling clergy and others for the promotion of religion by spreading the Scriptures"—and he received general recognition as the leader of the conservative wing, the party devoted to "the ancient truth." He sat through London Yearly Meeting of 1832 in what he calls "suffering silence," weeping much, for his tears came easily, reflecting in his own soul that "great professions of faith in the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord do not of themselves bring a savour of life, precious sweetness, or weight, solidity and power to a meeting," and inwardly confirmed in his feeling that "the most full and literally sound acknowledgment of faith in the blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our blessed Redeemer, may be still in the oldness of the letter without the quickening of the inward living Power."[1]

He was so thoroughly entrenched in the past and so fixed in his feeling that "the old inheritance must be guarded" that he missed his chance to be a real *leader* and to carry the Society forward along the lines of its true destiny. He lived so much in retrospect that he had no intimation of the widening mission that lay before Friends. He was deeply grieved to find them launching out in the work of foreign missions, *preparing* for more efficient service, and especially was he set against all Bible school work.[2] During a public meeting appointed by Elizabeth Fry in Wales, and attended also by J. J. Gurney, Wilbur kept to his own room and "mourned," as he says, "over the state of things in this land, being fully aware that there are many in the station of Minister

[1] *Journal of the Life of John Wilbur* (Providence, R.I., 1859), p. 123.
[2] *Ib d.* p. 125.

who are in great measure lost to the times and seasons, the openings and shuttings of the blessed spirit of the gospel, and whose minds seem so beclouded and darkened that the true shining is not seen to go forth with brightness as in primitive days."[1] He held such an extreme conception of the infallible, supernatural, inward Light that all human preparation seemed to him an interference with the work of God. The human element must be suspended in order that the divine might work unhindered. In this particular emphasis his influence was extremely unfortunate, and left its mark for more than half a century upon those who looked upon him as a restorer of the old ways.

The cold iron went into his soul on the occasion of his visit to Norwich, the home of Joseph John Gurney. He felt that he received "uncivil usage" at the Quarterly Meeting in this place because, as a result of a rapid succession of public testimonies, no opportunity was given for him to "unburden" himself of that which had been on his mind for many days, while at a meeting especially appointed at his request, Wilbur felt that an attempt was made to "level" and annul his message after he had given it. He came away with the fixed impression that "a superficial, busy spirit prevailed" in Norwich, "with a shunning of the cross, a love of the friendship of the world and its greatness." Besides this he was convinced that "unsound doctrines have crept in—such as the belief that we are elected and justified before we are purified and sanctified, and a trusting in a mere imputed righteousness for salvation."[2]

The most important event of his English visit, however, was the publication of *Letters to a Friend on some of the Primitive Doctrines of Christianity* (1832). These Letters were written by Wilbur to George Crosfield, and were edited and published by the latter.[3] The first three Letters contain Wilbur's interpretation of Christianity.

[1] *Journal of the Life of John Wilbur* (Providence, R.I., 1859), p. 137.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 158.

[3] They are printed also as an Appendix to the *Journal* of John Wilbur, and I shall refer in the text to this copy. They were, too, printed in the *British Friend*.

He sets forth the usual doctrines of orthodox Christianity and he ascribes a very large place to the malicious work of Satan, who seems to him responsible for all the errors, heresies and apostasies in the history of the Church. One sees in his interpretation of Christianity how fully the doctrines of orthodox faith had filtered into the minds of even the most conservative Friends. He, like many others of the period, had a compartment mind. In one compartment the doctrine of an inward Light held complete sway and was the central fact. In another compartment, separated by impervious partitions, he carried along almost all the beliefs of the evangelical churches. His fourth Letter is an account of "the Secession in America," *i.e.* the separation of 1827. This letter, again, reveals the fact that John Wilbur was theologically as "sound" as the soundest "orthodox." He declares that the abandonment of the propitiatory sacrifice is an abandonment of Christianity itself, and carries with it a loss of all right to the covenant of Christ, since "everything depends on that blessed sacrifice."[1] The latest machinations of the devil, however, are as sad as the havoc wrought in 1827. He is leading astray in another direction professed Quakers who have *not* been tainted with infidelity toward the propitiatory sacrifice. "The devil is dressed up in his old garb," "his cloven foot and cunning intention" are once more apparent. This time, the enemy of all good has induced professing Quakers to slight and question "the work of Christ within us," as the Hicksites questioned "the work without us." "Now," Wilbur concludes, "if we reject either of these provisions for our salvation, we cannot be saved."[2]

The fifth Letter deals with the Holy Scriptures, and in this Letter Wilbur gives his main contention, namely, that when the Scriptures are exalted above and put in the place of the inward teaching of the Spirit of Christ the central ground of Quakerism is shifted and the basis of silent worship and spiritual ministry endangered.

[1] *Journal*, pp. 585, 586.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 587.

The adversary [in plain words, the devil] hates the holy Scriptures and would induce men to disbelieve them altogether, but, when he cannot effect this purpose, it is like himself to exalt them in name, even above their right order and true standing, that so he may dishonour Christ . . . inducing ministers to abandon that flesh-paining exercise of waiting for the promise of the Father and setting them to work [it is still the devil] to preach the letter only instead of Christ Jesus in the demonstration of the spirit and power.[1]

The sixth, and final, Letter is a defence of the old way of "plainness and self-denial," a review of the advantages of "the hedge," "the fenced wall," which the old-time Quaker customs supply in a world full of temptation and allurements. This part of Wilbur's "concern" is historically important and deserves emphasis. He was distinctly backward-looking. Quakerism for him essentially involved a well-defined group of customs and a form of dress and speech. To lose the outward was to hazard the inward.

These Letters made John Wilbur a marked man. He stood forth among the conservatives as a fearless defender of the ancient "truth." He was obviously brave and uncompromising. He would not deviate a hair's breadth. On the other hand, he was now recognized by those who were in sympathy with Gurney and the evangelical wing of the Society as an "obstacle" to the progress of this movement, which for them was the "gospel."

The situation was brought to a crisis by the request of Joseph John Gurney for a certificate liberating him for extensive religious labour in America. This "concern" of his had been long ripening and came to full maturity in 1837. Gurney's own view of the greatness of this call and of the sacrifice involved in it is well told in his letter of 28th January 1837, to his brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton:

With respect to the sacrifice, I feel and acknowledge it to be great, and by far the greatest I have ever been called upon to make in my Christian course. Yet I do not consider that

[1] *Journal*, pp. 592, 593.

absence in a distant land during two or even three years, involves the permanent surrender either of my home privileges or home duties. It is what most men would submit to without much hesitation in the pursuit of health. With respect to my darling children, and all over whom I am here permitted to exercise some beneficial influence, my mind is stayed upon two grand considerations. First, that the influence of Christian love, and even of Christian authority when grounded in love, is by no means extinguished, but in some respects increased, by the absence of the party who exerts it, and it may, by the very discipline which a temporary separation involves, be prepared for a yet more vigorous and decided exercise in future. And secondly, and more especially, that if my absence is ordered of the Lord, it is far safer for my children as well as for myself, that I should be absent than present; for there is no example which I could set before them with so little advantage as that of disobedience to the glorious Saviour to whose service I wish them to be devoted.[1]

His Monthly and Quarterly Meetings united in granting him a certificate for the service in America. London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders did not *unite* in granting the certificate, though they did finally grant it. When the proposal for Gurney's visit had been spread before the meeting of Ministers and Elders, he told those present of his deep conflicts, his great baptisms, the sacrifices which had been laid upon him, and his devotion to the peculiar views and testimonies of the Society. Friends who were in sympathy with his position expressed much unity with his concern. Sarah (Lynes) Grubb, however, gave voice to a different attitude. She said that she had hoped she might have been allowed to remain silent, but since coming into that meeting she felt that she durst not be otherwise than faithful to her Divine Master in this matter. She knew that the friend who had spread this concern before them was a man of talent, learning and much fluency of speech, that he was desirous of doing all the good he could, but he needed many humbling baptisms to prepare him for service in the Church, and she thought they needed greater evidence than they had yet had, that he was what he was by the

[1] *Memoirs*, pp. 296, 297.

Grace of God: that as she sought to know the will of God in deep intercession of soul, "Restraint, restraint, restraint," had been the impression upon her mind, and she believed the language was to go forth, even from the Lord, "The Spirit suffereth it not now," "The Spirit suffereth it not now."

Ann Jones was greatly relieved at the remarks of her beloved friend, Sarah Grubb, with every word of which she cordially united. George Jones, John Grubb, Abram Fisher, and several other men and women Friends expressed similar views. Others thought J. J. Gurney was improved, some that he was deepened of late, but that this was not the right time to liberate him; several others on considering the part which he took in the late agitation in the Society (the *Beacon* controversy), thought it must appear desirable that our friend should not be liberated at this juncture.[1]

The first session of the meeting adjourned without action and at the following session the same diversity reappeared. The discussion lasted in the second sitting (Saturday, 3rd June) nearly five hours. The feeling of opposition to Gurney's scholarship on the part of the unlearned and simple-minded came out strongly in the remarks of Charlotte Burgess—wife of William Burgess of Leicester—who declared that she had endured "an extraordinary weight of exercise by day and by night" ever since the proposal had been before the meeting. She had a message to deliver against "those who were talented, learned and rich as to this world." "Unless they submitted to the sword which in the visions of light she had seen unsheathed among us, they would be swept away by another weapon, even the besom of the Most High."[2]

[1] This account is taken from an unsigned contemporaneous manuscript which was sent to America to enlighten Friends here of the lack of unity which prevailed when the certificate was being considered. It is printed in an anonymous pamphlet, entitled *Proceedings of the Y.M. of the Society of Friend, held in London, 1837*. It was first printed in *The Patriot*, a newspaper of the time, and reprinted with additions, corrections and explanatory notes, and covered 93 pages. The account given in the text refers to pp. 10, 11 of the *Proceedings*.

[2] *Proceedings*, p. 73.

The certificate was in the end granted, and it was so drawn up by the Clerk as to conceal, as far as possible, the lack of unity that had appeared in the Meeting of Ministers and Elders.[1] A special request was made that no members present at the meeting should inform Friends in America of what had been said during the deliberations. This caution was not observed, but on the contrary, a full account, as stated above, was sent over to a few "concerned" Friends in Philadelphia, before Gurney arrived. He was apparently not much disturbed by the debate over his certificate. He made the following comment in a letter to a Friend: "It was most carefully sifted, and deliberated on, and ended with a clear decision for my liberation."[2]

During the Yearly Meeting of 1837 Sarah Grubb, who, though present at the opening sitting of the Meeting of Ministers and Elders, was "labouring under a serious illness," sent a significant letter to the Men's Meeting. She called upon them to be steadfast to the truth and to uphold the standard of the faith. She declared that the Society was passing through a time of sorrow and affliction and that an insidious spirit was endeavouring to lead the youth away from "the ancient testimonies." She intimated that there were those who were "secretly and subtilely" injuring God's people and "undermining our testimonies," but she nevertheless believed that "thousands would yet be drawn to the standard of the few who remained faithful." The letter was an unmistakable thrust at Gurney and his friends.[3]

The journey and labours of Joseph John Gurney in America can hardly be over-estimated for the importance of their influence and bearing on the Society of Friends. He visited every corner and remote region where Friends were settled. He appointed meetings in many of the great American cities and in almost all the American

[1] Wm. Allen was Clerk and giving his judgment he said that "he had never been equally conflicted about any subject that had come before that meeting, but he thought on the whole that it was the mind of the greater part of those who had spoken that his friend Joseph John Gurney should be liberated" (*Proceedings*, p. 75).

[2] *Memoirs*, p. 301.

[3] *Proceedings*, pp. 67, 68.

colleges and universities. He gave a distinction to the Society which it had not to the same degree received since the birth period of Quakerism. He formed a friendship with Henry Clay, at the time the foremost leader in American politics, and he became intimate with many of the most distinguished religious leaders in the country. He was a powerful preacher, eloquent, learned, equipped with a vast array of historical facts, profoundly religious, greatly gifted in prayer and possessed of grace and culture in a unique measure. The influence of prestige is a force everywhere to be reckoned with and it was signally illustrated in the extensive itinerant service of this famous Englishman. He notes in his *Journal* that there were two thousand persons present at Arch St. meeting in Philadelphia on the occasion of his first visit to that city—"the largest assembly of Friends," he adds, "that has been known there since the Hicksite separation."[1] A letter written by Julianna R. Wood of Philadelphia to Richard Cadbury of England, described this meeting as composed of three thousand persons. She continues:

> It was the first time of seeing him to many of his audience who evinced the deepest attention and most breathless interest in what he had to communicate. Interest not unmingled with anxiety in the minds of some from the reports of all sorts currently circulated of him.[2]

His account of the effect of his visit in the pioneer town of Richmond, Indiana, can be taken almost as a sample:

> Never, to the best of my knowledge, have I witnessed so remarkable an assemblage of people, as that which was convened for public worship at Richmond, on the commencement of the Yearly Meeting for Indiana: Friends and others, arriving on horseback, or in the grotesque carriages of the country. The horses, "hitched" to nearly every tree of the wood which surrounded the large red brick meeting-house, formed in themselves a curious spectacle. It was supposed that about 3000 people were accommodated within the walls; and nearly as many, unable

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 308.
[2] *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Society*, vol. vii. p. 56.

to obtain a place in the house, were walking on the premises. It is the constant custom of the people in the surrounding country to attend the "Quaker Meeting" on this particular occasion . . . the whole population of Friends within the limits of this Yearly Meeting is about 30,000.[1]

Everywhere, except where there was settled opposition to his interpretation, he carried everything before him and enjoyed a triumphal procession, awakening young Friends, arousing fresh interest in the Bible and giving a new enthusiasm for religious life and work. There was, however, a substantial section of the Society in America which beheld and listened with marked concern and disapproval. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting the opposition was large and powerful. In Ohio it was distinctly to be reckoned with and in New England the opposing forces were led by John Wilbur who was determined that the Society should not be carried away from its old guiding stars without a vigorous challenge. Wilbur has formulated in a brief but extremely important passage the gravamen of his charge:

Instead of submitting to die with Christ, and to abide the painful struggle of yielding up the will and wisdom of the flesh these [innovators] have moulded and fashioned to themselves a substitute, by professedly extolling and claiming the faith of Christ's incarnate sufferings and propitiatory sacrifice upon the cross, without the gates of Jerusalem, as the *whole* covenant of salvation, and by Him thus accomplished without them; and, consequently, it is feared [they] are carnally believing and trusting in this alone for justification, without its essential concomitant, the true obedience of faith and the work of sanctification wrought in the heart.[2]

Wilbur had an important interview with Gurney while the latter was in New England, and Wilbur's young friend and *fidus Achates*, Thomas B. Gould of Newport, also had a searching personal visit with the English Minister without any comfort or satisfaction to either of the Friends who were disturbed over the visitor's views.

Wilbur travelled widely through New England and

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 312. [2] Wilbur's *Journal*, p. 273.

also in the limits of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting during the period of Gurney's sojourn in America and immediately subsequent to it. He interviewed numerous Friends, laid upon them his "concern," endeavoured to arouse the faithful "seed," warned and counselled the Church, circulated extracts from Gurney's writings, showing his "departures" from the "truth," carried on an extensive correspondence with the "ancient remnant" in England and America and stood out as the leader and forefront of the forces opposed to "Gurneyism" in all its forms.

In 1847 Joseph John Gurney died, seven years after his return from his religious labours in America, but meantime the tide in his favour, and in favour of the interpretation of Christianity to which he had devoted his eminent life, had very strongly set in. A profound transformation was apparent in all quarters of the Quaker field in England and America—the Society was awakening from its quiet ways, was turning from introspection to the study of the Bible and was arousing itself to grapple with the tasks of the world around it. But even before Gurney's death a dark cloud had arisen in America which was charged with disturbance.

In an evil moment, the leaders of New England Yearly Meeting—men of wealth and station and commanding influence — resolved to discipline and silence John Wilbur and to remove the uncomfortable thorn in the side of the Yearly Meeting, now overwhelmingly "Gurneyite" in its attitude and sympathy. It must be admitted that Wilbur was very annoying, as all such uncompromising defenders of the faith are. He was stubborn, infallible, persistent. He had nailed his colours to the mast and would not yield an inch. He was opposed to all change. The past was sacred and its truth and its practice were to be held, let come what would. He felt himself "called out" to oppose a system which he believed to be a substitute for real Quakerism. But the only true way to have dealt with this serious, high-minded, sincere, essentially spiritual man was to let him talk and write to his heart's content and carry

what influence he could. There was great need, in the process of transition, to preserve the vision and the message which had come from the past. The solidity, the inward depth, of the ancient remnant were of immense importance. It would have been worth almost any trial of patience to have kept in the changing body the stabilizing, conserving element. There never was a case in which *the way of love* would have been more effective. The way of attack and of flat opposition was resorted to instead. The leaders seemed bent on having a surgical operation in order to be rid of the disturbance to the body. It almost seems as though "the old adversary," of whom Wilbur talks so much in his *Letters*, got loose and played havoc among "the children of the Light"! I shall not ask my readers to travel through the dry and dreary details of the controversy. It is too tedious and too pitiful. A very few facts will suffice for this present story.

The instrument which was used to discipline and suppress the stout defender of the ancient way was a committee of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and finally a still more authoritative committee of New England Yearly Meeting. John Wilbur's own Monthly Meeting — South Kingston Monthly Meeting in Rhode Island — was in large measure in sympathy with him, and had no desire to make a "case" against him. The only way to reach him therefore was an extra-normal way—from above, through the superior meetings. On the ground that "love and unity" did not prevail in some sections of the Quarterly Meeting, a committee of Ministers and Elders was appointed to find out the cause of the trouble and, if possible, "to restore unity." This committee at once took up the case of John Wilbur, as it looked upon him as the arch-disturber of unity, and after working on the case for a year called in a committee of the Yearly Meeting which had been appointed "to extend a general care on behalf of the Yearly Meeting for the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, *the preservation*

*of love and unity*, and to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for." This committee, with this extensive scope, and with almost unlimited powers, was composed of the most weighty and influential persons in the Yearly Meeting. They were, however, deeply attached to Joseph John Gurney and to his type of Quakerism, and they were determined to end Wilbur's opposition to what seemed to them "manifest destiny" for the Yearly Meeting. They pushed forward relentlessly, using now one arm of their disciplinary machinery and now another, until finally, not being able to induce South Kingston Monthly Meeting to disown its distinguished member, they reported to Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting that South Kingston Monthly Meeting was "insubordinate." A committee of the Quarterly Meeting was now appointed to take drastic measures. It recommended that South Kingston Monthly Meeting be dissolved and its members merged into Greenwich Monthly Meeting. This course was taken. The autonomy of South Kingston Meeting ceased, and Greenwich Monthly Meeting absorbed its rights and powers. This latter meeting at once proceeded to disown John Wilbur from membership, which act was accomplished early in 1843.

Meantime another complication had arisen. Swansea (often spelled "Swanzey") Monthly Meeting also, like South Kingston, a part of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, was seriously divided in its attitude toward the two leaders and the two types of Quakerism, to such an extent that it could not agree upon the appointment of new Overseers for the meeting or upon a new Clerk. The Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee to assist in bringing order out of the confusion in Swansea Monthly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting's committee joined with it in its difficult mission. These two committees suggested persons for Clerks and for Overseers, and endeavoured to induce the Monthly Meeting to proceed along the lines of their "advice." Part of the Monthly Meeting was ready to comply, and part of the

members refused to comply. The Quarterly Meeting then appointed a number of Friends to attend Swansea Monthly Meeting in August 1844, and assist it in transacting its business. This was a well-known disciplinary expedient, when agreement could not be arrived at otherwise. It failed to work on this occasion. The visitors and their sympathizers insisted on David Shove for Clerk, and a section of the members as strongly insisted on the old Clerk, Thomas Wilbur. The outcome was that the meeting had two Clerks, each claiming his right, and each backed by a section of the meeting. When the "Shove section" adjourned, the "Wilbur section," consisting of about thirty members, remained behind and continued to transact business as Swansea Monthly Meeting. This was in the forenoon. In the afternoon the adjourned Monthly Meeting—with David Shove as Clerk—met and completed its business, also claiming to be Swansea Monthly Meeting. Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting found itself confronted with reports from two bodies claiming to be Swansea Monthly Meeting. The attempt to decide the issue produced a division of the Quarterly Meeting.

Two important decisions were thereupon thrown upon New England Yearly Meeting. First came the "appeal" of John Wilbur for his rights of membership, taken from him by action of Greenwich Monthly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting of 1844 decided that he was rightly disowned and sustained its subordinate meetings—Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting and Greenwich Monthly Meeting—in their actions in the case. In 1845, when New England Yearly Meeting assembled at Newport, Rhode Island, it had reports from two bodies claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting. A proposition was made, and generally united with, that the Representatives from the other seven Quarterly Meetings should meet in the interval between the forenoon and afternoon sessions and report which of the two Rhode Island Quarterly Meetings was the genuine and rightly-constituted one, and it was further proposed that the nomination of Clerks

should be deferred until this point was settled. This latter course was unusual, as it was the long-standing custom for the Representatives to nominate Clerks at the beginning of the second session of the Yearly Meeting, but the meeting itself, being the ultimate source of authority, undoubtedly had full power to defer the appointment of Clerks if it so wished.

At the afternoon session, before the Representatives had reported their decision, a member of the meeting rose and said that a portion of the Representatives had met and were united in proposing the name of Thomas B. Gould for Clerk and Charles Perry for Assistant Clerk —these two persons being devoted adherents of John Wilbur. The main body of the Representatives—forty-five—informed the meeting that they had not been consulted and had no knowledge of this action. It had been taken by the Representatives from one of the meetings claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in conjunction with four other Representatives from other Quarterly Meetings. The two persons thus nominated for Clerks—Thomas B. Gould and Charles Perry—came forward and proceeded to carry on the business. The old Clerk, Abraham Shearman, Jr., holding his position by previous action of the Yearly Meeting, protested and requested the two persons to desist. They paid no attention to this remonstrance, but went on conducting business parallel with the larger current of business which the main body was transacting, until adjournment was taken.

The next morning, when the larger section of the Yearly Meeting met to hear the conclusion which had been reached by the Representatives, the smaller section was absent, but three persons soon appeared and demanded the use of the room and the Clerk's table, saying that they were sent by "New England Yearly Meeting." They were told that New England Yearly Meeting was then sitting in that room. The group forming the rival body, with Thomas B. Gould as Clerk, continued in another place to transact its business and to

perfect its organization. It consisted eventually of about five hundred members, as against about sixty-five hundred in the membership of the larger body. Divisions were effected in several Monthly Meetings, and one of the first acts to be carried through by the Friends who had separated was the re-establishment of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and the re-instatement of John Wilbur as a Friend, and all others who had been disowned for their opposition to Gurney ideas. The "schism" was thus accomplished in New England in 1845.

It became at once an urgent and insistent question who in all these contentions was *right* and which body was the true and authentic successor of the ancient New England Yearly Meeting. There was no body of Friends existing anywhere in the world which possessed the power and authority to answer this double question. Each Yearly Meeting was an independent unit and its own seat of authority. The sister Yearly Meetings could exert only a moral and psychological control and could express only their own, more or less prejudiced, opinions. Each one of the two New England Yearly Meetings issued its own defence of its position. That of the larger body was called *Narrative of Facts and Circumstances that have tended to produce a Secession.* The smaller body answered with a tract entitled *Strictures on a pamphlet purporting to be a "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances."*

The Massachusetts court, in the case of Earle *vs.* Wood, decided, on a legal basis, that the larger Yearly Meeting, the one representing the Gurney party, was the legitimate successor and the rightful body.[1] London Yearly Meeting, acting somewhat *in loco parentis*, gave its official sanction to the larger body and sent its official correspondence to that body alone.[2] Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was strongly anti-Gurney in its sympathy, though a very determined and influential minority supported the

[1] Report of the case of Earle et al. *vs.* Wood et al. (Boston, 1855). Rufus Choate, then the most famous lawyer in America, managed the Gurney side of the case.

[2] There was a strong minority in sympathy with the Wilbur party. The attitude of this party finds expression in the columns of *The British Friend* of this period.

Gurney body in New England. At the opening session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1846, the Clerk, William Evans, reported that two epistles had been received, "purporting to be from New England Yearly Meeting." He proposed that the whole subject should be referred to the Meeting for Sufferings to investigate the matter and report to the Yearly Meeting next year. This proposal was discussed for two hours and then action was delayed for one year, in order to preserve harmony. As the Yearly Meeting for 1846 was about to adjourn Samuel Cope rose and gave a very "close communication" on the text: "How is the gold become dim and the fine gold changed." He said that some who had stood firm in the troubles through which we had lately passed were caught in the temptations of the present day. Joab stood faithful in the revolt of Absalom, but was found blowing the trumpet before Adonijah. So some who had opposed the heresies of Elias Hicks were caught in the Gurneyisms of the present time. He believed the Lord would shake London Yearly Meeting to its foundation for its unfaithfulness in allowing Balaam to go forth to seduce the people.[1]

The next Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia, 1847, was a time of great tension. The Meeting for Sufferings had in the interim, without any official instructions, prepared a document dealing with "unsound writings by members of the Society of Friends." The document contained copious extracts from the writings of Joseph John Gurney, contrasted in each case with passages from Robert Barclay and other early Friends. The document, though an uncritical piece of work, was a powerful assault on Gurney, and the reading of it was frequently interrupted by protests from those who sympathized with the deceased Friend who was so unmercifully attacked. Charles Evans, referring to the interruptions, declared that no sophistry and no false issues would divert the meeting from the

[1] This account is taken from MS. notes on Philadelphia Y.M. from 1830 to 1861, which were copied and preserved by the late Joshua L. Baily.

William Forster, Josiah Forster, George Stacey, and John Allen of London Y.M., were in attendance at Philadelphia Y.M. in 1846.

question before it. "It was now to be decided whether Philadelphia Yearly Meeting would adhere to our ancient principles or adopt the modified Quakerism which had been attempted to be foisted upon us."[1] Amid great difference of judgment the decision was taken, though not in unity, to refer the document to the Meeting for Sufferings for publication. In 1848 the trouble remained as acute as ever. After much discussion a proposition was made, and finally approved, that the whole question of recognizing one of the New England bodies should be referred to the Meeting for Sufferings, the judgment of that meeting to be reported the next year. A laborious investigation of the matters of fact and of the disciplinary proceedings involved was undertaken by the Meeting for Sufferings and its findings were reported in 1849.[2] This report is plainly on the side of the Wilbur-body, though it is an effort to arrive at a judicial and impartial decision. It holds that the various committees of the superior meetings dealing with the cases, which we have reviewed, transcended their rights and powers at several points in their proceedings against John Wilbur and his supporters, and that the Yearly Meeting which authorized and sustained these proceedings was to blame for the separation, and that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting cannot be in unity with it until it has "rectified or annulled" its irregular proceedings. On the other hand the *Report* declares:

> Although the manner in which this separation was effected [by the Wilbur party] was not such as, we think, affords a precedent safe to be followed in the organization of a Yearly Meeting, yet inasmuch as those Friends who compose the smaller body have acted from a sincere desire to maintain the doctrines and discipline of the Society, and the right secured by it to all its members; and had been subjected to proceedings oppressive in their character, and in violation of the acknowledged principles of our church government, we believe that they continue to be entitled to the rights of membership, and to such acknowledgment

[1] MS. Account.

[2] This investigation is given in *A Report of the Meeting for Sufferings adopted by the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia, in relation to the Facts and Causes of the Division which occurred in New England Yearly Meeting in 1845* (Phila., 1849).

by their brethren as may be necessary for securing the enjoyment of those rights.[1]

Translated into unambiguous words this passage means that the course taken by the smaller body was in the last resort revolutionary, though it was a revolution excused by the drastic methods of the majority. That must, I think, be the conclusion of a calm and impartial history. The forceful steps taken by the committees of the superior meetings were never flatly contrary to Discipline, but they were at some critical points defensible only on a very loose and elastic construction of Discipline and difficult also to defend on grounds of custom and precedent, but at the same time the final act of separation, made by the supporters of John Wilbur, was an act clearly not justifiable on grounds either of Discipline or precedent; it was revolutionary.

When we turn to the deeper issues of truth and doctrine we must, again, conclude that no clear and decisive verdict can be given to either party in the contention. Joseph John Gurney held and taught a type of Christianity which differed in a very marked way from that expounded and proclaimed by the founders of the Society of Friends. *Theologically* Gurney stood in line with the puritan opponents of Quakerism rather than with Fox and Barclay and Penington. They were mystics; he was non-mystical, even anti-mystical. They were profoundly against the central positions of Augustine and Calvin; he was very near of kin to both these pillar evangelicals. For the Quaker founders Christianity was primarily a thing of life and experience; for him it was essentially conformity of belief with the orthodox standards of faith. For them the elemental basis of religion was God revealed in man; for him it was the historic, miraculous revelation preserved in an infallible Book. And yet there was much in Gurney which would have made Fox and Barclay and Penington love him and approve him. He was absolutely loyal to Jesus Christ and as eager to know the

[1] *A Report*, p. 37.

mind and will of Christ for him in his day as they had been in their day. He had in lofty measure in his own personality the Christian life and experience which they so emphatically emphasized. He was a saintly man, ready always to crucify self for the advancement of the greater cause and ready to be spent utterly and completely, if so the sufferings and burdens of his fellow-men could be lightened. He knew, as well as they did, that he had found his God and met his Saviour and felt the healing drop into his soul. His religion, too, was first-hand religion, though evangelical rather than mystical.

John Wilbur supposed that *he* was in every particular precisely like the primitive Quakers: he believed that *he* was in the true Quaker apostolic succession. He was, however, by no means as close to the original type as he thought he was. Intellectually he held strongly, stoutly, the doctrine of the inward Light as he found it formulated in the early Quaker books, and here he was much nearer the original founders than was Gurney. But original Quakerism was not something formulated in a book. It was a mighty experience of God, alive and dynamic in transformed persons who henceforth were imitations and copies of nobody else. They struck out freshly, creatively, constructively, with an inner consciousness of divine equipment and divine leading. They were apostolic in just this sense that they were not slavishly dependent on man or on men, but they went as the Spirit willed for their new time. John Wilbur was in striking degree a child of the past. He was a sensitive instrument for the transmission of what had come traditionally to be considered "the legacy of the fathers." He did not, like the founders, discover anew the soul's way to life. He exhibits no profound upheaval, no intense and transforming spiritual experience. He seeks everywhere "the old paths," and he walks them as far as possible with unvarying feet. He had overlooked the most central feature of Quaker faith, namely, that revelation is a progressive affair, that nobody who merely copies and reproduces the past is in the apostolic succession, that the living Christ sweeps onward,

makes ancient good uncouth, and carries His true "seed" on into fresh experiences, enlarged ideas, growing faiths, greater deeds, and more daring missions. John Wilbur was of the static order and belonged to the medieval type and period of Quakerism, not to the great birth period and the primitive type. As against Gurney's theology he was traditionally right, but as a leader for the new era he was bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes of the past. Neither one of these two men, noble-hearted and consecrated as they both were, was the long-awaited prophet who could lead the Society of Friends to new heights of vision and set it forward on a new line of march toward the fulfilment of its spiritual destiny. But at the same time there was no sound reason why these two men should not have lived and worked harmoniously in the same Christian fold.

The difference in their faith was a difference in temperament and in emphasis. They were both, broadly speaking, orthodox in theology. Wilbur held all the orthodox positions as soundly as Gurney did. The real ground of the trouble lay in the fact that he was obsessed with the idea that Gurney was maintaining the position that "sound belief" was enough to save a man, whereas Wilbur put his main stress on inner events, attitude of soul, obedience of spirit, faithfulness to one's own Light within. Gurney did not count these things nehushtan, *i.e.* "nothing at all," but he cared so much for right views and "availing faith" that he understressed the cross-bearing work of individual obedience, the spiritual travail for complete adjustment of will to the will of God made known in one's own personal deeps. The old relic of infallibility still remained. Each party assumed that it was absolutely right, and therefore the other must be wrong, and the only way to save the precious truth was to hew to the line, regardless of what the strokes of the axe might cost.

If only New England Yearly Meeting had been concerned in the controversy the tragedy could have been borne. The loss of five hundred members from the body of seven thousand, removing, as it did, some of the most

mature, deeply prepared and thoroughly seasoned persons in its group, was a real catastrophe, though the catastrophe was more obvious still when one thought of what the smaller body had lost, and when one reflected on the slow shrinkage and contraction that were sure to follow in their group. But New England did not and could not live unto itself, or "separate" unto itself. All "orthodox" Quakerism was at once involved in the tangle.

London and Dublin Yearly Meetings recognized the larger body in New England almost as a matter of course, and, under the rule of the still prevailing "either-or" exclusiveness, the other body was repudiated as though not existing. New York, Baltimore, North Carolina, and Indiana Yearly Meetings also recognized the larger, and repudiated the smaller, body in New England, though small "separations" occurred in New York and Baltimore.[1]

The tragic battle-grounds were in two other American Yearly Meetings, Philadelphia and Ohio. Philadelphia, as we have seen, was strongly in sympathy with the smaller body in New England. The "weight of the membership" in this important Yearly Meeting was pronounced and emphatic in its conservative attitude. The "pillar" Friends would gladly have recognized the smaller body, joined in correspondence with it, and repudiated the larger body, if they could have had their way unhindered. There was, however, a strong, resolute, and very intelligent minority in Philadelphia, extremely loyal to Joseph John Gurney who had awakened and kindled them. These Friends believed that the future of Quakerism was with the Gurney movement, not with the Wilbur tendency. They were forward-looking, and they were eager to ally themselves with those forces in the Society which would in the long run bring enlargement and expansion. It was the group

[1] The separation in New York was largely confined to Scipio Quarterly Meeting, which in 1848 was about evenly divided, and to Ferrisburg Quarterly Meeting, which in 1853 furnished a small fraction of its membership to the conservative body. This New York small group formed the habit of dividing and pushed "separation" to an absurdity. A tiny "separation" occurred in Baltimore in 1854, at first only six men and six women forming the "conservative branch." This separate branch later included about one hundred members, mostly belonging to Nottingham Quarterly Meeting.

of men of this kind and attitude who were the educational leaders of their body. They were the makers and managers of Haverford College, and they were also the creators of a very important literary journal for the exposition of the truth, *Friends' Review*, begun at this crisis. It was impossible for the conservative wing to ignore this influential group of liberal Friends. To force the issue and to override them was to risk a serious division in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The result was that the conservatives went as far as they dared to go and then waited and temporized, in the hope that matters would gradually settle to the honour of truth. John Pease and Benjamin Seebohm of England, two powerful preachers and leaders of the Gurney type, attended Philadelphia Yearly Meeting during the crisis, the former in 1845 and the latter in 1847. Their presence was a very positive moral strength to the Gurney group, and it had a moderating and restraining influence even on the conservative element. How strongly the central current of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting ran in the ancient channel can, however, be seen from the documents issued during the period of crisis by the Meeting for Sufferings and endorsed by the Yearly Meeting. The important documents are *An Appeal for the Ancient Doctrines of the Religious Society of Friends* (1847); *A Report of the Meeting for Sufferings* (1849); and *A Brief Narrative in Relation to the Position of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends* (1873). The Epistle to London from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1846 contained a passage of warning against "unsound doctrines" which, it claimed, were being freely disseminated both in England and America, and Friends in Great Britain were seriously summoned to their duty as guardians of the truth.

A conference of all "orthodox" Yearly Meetings was called to meet in Baltimore in 1849 for the purpose of restoring unity, and a second conference was held in 1851, but Philadelphia Yearly Meeting refused to send delegates on the ground that only the larger body in New England had been invited. Year after year the annual gatherings

in Philadelphia were critical occasions, but wisdom and restraint prevailed, and the body continued to hold together and to postpone decisive action until a new crisis arose out of the complicated situation in Ohio.

In Ohio Yearly Meeting the lines were about evenly drawn between the two parties and there existed, as in Philadelphia, an influential middle party determined at all costs to avoid separation. Benjamin Hoyle, the Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, was in sympathy with the conservative wing, but he was intensely desirous as pilot to weather the storm without a catastrophe to the Yearly Meeting. After the lines were sharply drawn in 1845, the Representatives never found it possible to *unite* in proposing a Clerk, therefore no name for that position was proposed, so that year after year the old Clerk, Benjamin Hoyle, continued to serve. He was naturally unsatisfactory to the large Gurney section, but he could not be dislodged without a separation. In 1845 Epistles were read from both Yearly Meetings in New England. In 1846 neither one was read. A graver difficulty still arose over the problem of dealing with visiting Ministers from the "separated" Yearly Meetings. To receive and approve a visiting Minister was construed to be an approval of the body to which the Minister belonged. Ohio fluctuated in its treatment of epistolary correspondence. Finally in 1854 it was confronted with a situation which forced the issue. Eliza P. Gurney, the widow of Joseph John Gurney, attended Ohio Yearly Meeting that year and, from the other extreme, Thomas B. Gould, of Rhode Island—second only to John Wilbur himself in his leadership of the conservative forces and Clerk of the smaller body in New England—was present with certificates.

Thomas B. Gould, in explaining his presence there, made a vigorous arraignment of the Gurney party in New England and endeavoured to prove that his body was the rightly constituted one. This was not a happy course to take at such a critical time, and it helped to mature the determination of the Gurney party to end the era of

indecision and compromise. When the Representatives met to agree upon a Clerk, twelve of them out of forty-two insisted on proposing Jonathan Binns, two were neutral and twenty-eight were in favour of the old Clerk, so that once more they could not *unite*. At the opening of the second session, however, a Friend arose and announced that the Representatives had conferred and a portion of them had agreed to propose the name of Jonathan Binns as Clerk. Another Friend then reported that the Representatives had failed to *unite*. Much confusion followed, one party approving Jonathan Binns and the other insisting on the continuance of the old Clerk. The upshot of the *impasse* was a division. The meeting split into two—a "Hoyle Yearly Meeting" and a "Binns Yearly Meeting." In this instance the larger body was conservative, or "Wilburite," and the smaller body was evangelical, or "Gurneyite." Thus the large and weighty Yearly Meeting of Ohio was wrecked and has never recovered from this terrible catastrophe.[1]

Once more all the Quaker bodies were faced with the task of deciding which of the two was the legitimate body to "recognize." The problem was fairly easy everywhere except in Philadelphia. It seemed now that nothing could prevent a division in the ranks of that Yearly Meeting. The ten years between 1845 and 1855 had seen a marked increase in the power and influence of the liberal progressive element. More clearly, too, had it become evident to this element that the Yearly Meeting was doomed to isolation and to a solitary existence, if it allied itself exclusively with the "Wilbur-bodies," consisting as they did of only a few thousand Friends in the world. And yet it was obvious enough that the controlling section of the Yearly Meeting could not, short of a miracle, be induced to recognize and affiliate with the so-called "Gurney-bodies" in America. The Yearly Meeting of 1855 was a "painful" occasion,

[1] The important documents on this separation are: *Some Account of the Late Separation in Ohio Y.M.* (1855), *A Testimony for the Truth* (1865), Enoch Lewis' *Account of Ohio Y.M.* (1854) and Enoch Lewis' *Brief Review* (1855).

with ominous threats of separation at critical moments, though the catastrophe was finally avoided. In 1856 the clouds were still darker and the danger more imminent. At the most critical moment Samuel Bettle, Jr., proposed that no Epistles be sent by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for that year to any body of Friends, but this course failed to carry. As the Yearly Meeting was about to conclude, Israel W. Morris rose, as a representative of the Gurney sentiment, and asked Friends, who felt inclined to do so, to remain and "feel for" the right course for them in this hour of solemn crisis. This appeared to mean separation, but definite action was again postponed. The next year, 1857, the proposal to stop all correspondence was repeated, but the body seemed not yet ready for such a drastic course. Finally Israel W. Morris once more called upon Friends to remain behind, at the close of the session, and take definite action, in view of the fact that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had in its correspondence identified itself with "separatists" and was cutting itself off from the main body of Quakerism. The response to this call was so large and impressive that "separation" seemed certain unless some middle way could be found. At this crucial moment the Yearly Meeting concluded to adopt the proposal to suspend epistolary correspondence, and after six hours of critical discussion the integrity of the meeting was saved by the adoption of the following historic minute:

Epistles from our brethren at their Yearly Meetings in London and Dublin were received and now read, as was also the printed London General Epistle. In consideration of our present condition, and the disunity that has appeared on some points, particularly respecting our epistolary correspondence, after much time spent thereon, and the general expression of sentiment by friends, it was concluded to suspend, for this year, our epistolary correspondence with all the Yearly Meetings; and the subject of the great importance and the desirableness of the restoration of unity and harmony, both amongst the members of this Yearly Meeting and in the Society at large, being brought into view, it was, under solid deliberation, concluded to refer its present condition to the representatives of the Quarterly Meetings

in this meeting, as a committee, now appointed weightily to deliberate thereon, and if way opens, to propose any measures for this meeting to adopt, which they may hope will contribute to the increase of unity; to make a Report to this meeting next year; it being clearly understood that they are not to interfere with, or unsettle, any of the previous decisions which this meeting has come to.[1]

By this desperate expedient, this middle of the road compromise, Philadelphia escaped being shattered and found a way, humiliating and narrowing by its withdrawal from others though it was, to self-preservation. The committee of Representatives, at the end of a year of consideration, reported that "way does not open to recommend the resumption of our correspondence with other Yearly Meetings at the present time."[2]

Another small separation occurred in England as a direct result of the issues set forth in this chapter. There were a few Friends in London Yearly Meeting who "mourned in secret, or at times mutually, over the laying waste of the Lord's heritage," and who came to the conclusion that "the truth" committed to the Society of Friends had been allowed to wane and was held in its purity only by the tiny "remnant" which had resisted the "innovations" that were sweeping over the Society. This "remnant" consisted of about fifty Friends with a small additional fringe of sympathizers—"middleway Friends"—who were not ready to go the whole way toward separation. This group held strongly with the position of John Wilbur and felt that the Wilburite meetings, the so-called "smaller bodies" in America, should be recognized by fraternal correspondence and taken into the Quaker fellowship. The little "remnant" began holding Conferences in 1862, the first one being held in London and being attended by seventeen Friends.

[1] *Minutes of Phila. Y.M.* for 1857.

[2] This compromise course resulted in a tiny "separation" in Philadelphia Y.M. The extreme conservatives withdrew in 1860 and organized a separate meeting calling themselves "Primitive Friends." A brief account of this body is given in Hodgson, vol. ii. chapter xv. The separatists numbered less than two hundred. Their annual meeting was called a "General Meeting" and was held at Fallsington, Pennsylvania.

The third Conference, also held in London, in 1863, attended by twenty-five Friends, declared that the authority of London Yearly Meeting had "lapsed," and that consequently the true and faithful remnant could no longer attend it or its subordinate meetings for discipline. This position, *i.e.* that the authority had "lapsed," was set forth and vigorously defended in a book written by one of their number, Daniel Pickard, and published in 1864 under the title, *An Expostulation on Doctrine, Practice and Discipline.* In 1868 three of these "remnant Friends" visited "the smaller bodies" in America and received much encouragement. They returned strong in their resolution not to affiliate any longer with London Yearly Meeting. They were further strengthened by a religious visit from Daniel Knoll of Ohio and Mahlon G. Kirkbride of Pennsylvania.

In 1869 the Conferences were discontinued, seven having been held, and definite steps were taken to form a "General Meeting," like that which the little body of separatist Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had organized at Fallsington, Pennsylvania. The first session of the proposed "General Meeting" was held at Fritchley in Derbyshire and was attended by twenty-five Friends. It entered at once into correspondence with "the little bodies" of Friends in America, and through a document written by one of its members it proceeded to prove to all Friends and to the world that the authority of London Yearly Meeting had "lapsed."[1] This little body of Fritchley Friends has continued to maintain a separate organization and to hold its own meetings for worship and discipline.

There are no doubt worse tragedies than division and schism. There come crises in the history of spiritual progress when the only way the truth can be preserved and transmitted is by the shattering of the institution

[1] This remarkable document which was sent both to London Y.M. and to the Commissioners of Charitable Trusts in London, was written by Thomas Drewry of Fleetwood, Lancashire, and is printed in Hodgson's *Soc. of Friends*, vol. ii. pp. 394-396. This is a one-sided though on the whole reliable source of information about this interesting little "remnant" which declared that the authority of all other Friends had "lapsed"!

which the truth has slowly builded but which has grown too static or too comfortable to propagate the very truth for which it exists. Sometimes the purified and prepared "remnant" must shake itself free from the larger mass that has lost its insight and its prophetic passion in its love of tradition, or in its lethargic comfort, or in its crass interest in the material loaves and fishes. But this shattering of the instrument is always and forever the very last resort and to be ventured only when the precious seed-truth can be saved in no other way. There have been few occasions in the whole history of Christianity when separation was the only remedy for the disease and when a resort to division carried the truth forward in an unmistakable advance.

In the controversy which we have been reviewing here there was no adequate ground for an appeal to this last and most desperate surgery. The fundamental truth of religion was never put in jeopardy by the course of either party. Right was never wholly on one side, wrong utterly and completely on the other. Neither party was carelessly flinging away the priceless jewel. The issue was merely an honest difference of opinion on points which called for patient study, careful research, sympathetic insight and larger experience. The slow accumulation of wisdom would have accomplished vastly more than hasty and bungling surgery could accomplish.

One of the most curious features of the controversy was the near approach of the two wings to each other on theological issues. It would be difficult to decide which party was the more emphatic advocate of the divinity of Christ. Both believed in the divine authority of the Scriptures; both accepted the doctrine of the "fall of man." In fact, the "little-body Friends" could hardly be surpassed by any evangelical Christians in their insistence on the ruin that has fallen upon man in his natural state. They turned for all their hope to the supernatural Light which they believed God had granted to man when he had nothing of his own that could assist toward salvation.

The entire controversy with its disastrous appeal to division reveals a low and sluggish spiritual condition in the Society of that period. There was a feeble grasp of the central truths of Christianity. There was lack of psychological insight and of historical knowledge. The perspective of vision was weak, unable to distinguish things near and things remote, truths that were fundamental and truths that were superficial and there were petty matters, tiny jealousies, little local issues colouring all the supposed warfare for truth. If the currents of spiritual life had run stronger, and if the experience of God had been greater there would have been no chapter of this kind to write. It is, it must be admitted, a somewhat Lilliputian battle of small issues, but it was not the less a hard, serious, honest, tragic struggle for what both parties believed to be Quakerism pure and simple. When the struggle was over each party held in its lean hand some of the fragments of the precious alabaster vase which the controversy had broken![1]

[1] There were a number of later divisions in some of the American meetings. These divisions will be dealt with briefly in later chapters.

END OF VOL. I

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The Later Periods
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